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THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S HEAD VALET

CONTAINING DETAILS OF THE PRIVATE LIFE OF

NAPOLEON, HIS FAMILY AND HIS COURT

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED BY

PERCY PINKERTON

IN FOUR VOLUMES—VOLUME III

LONDON
H. S. NICHOLS
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We reached Paris on the 1st of January, at nine o'clock in the evening. We found the grand hall in the Tuileries had been wholly re-decorated. The alterations were now completed, and on the Sunday following His Majesty's return, a performance was given of Paër's opera, *Griselda*. The hall was magnificent, the Royal boxes being close to the

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stage, facing each other. The interior was charmingly upholstered in crimson silk, with large mirrors that reflected either the hall or the stage. Still full of recollections of the handsome theatres in Italy, the Emperor found nothing but fault with the Tuileries hall. He thought it incommodious, ill-shaped and far too large for a palace theatre. In spite of all such criticisms, however, on the day of its inauguration, when the Emperor could appreciate the trouble taken by M. Fontaine to arrange the boxes in such a way as to show off all the ladies to the utmost advantage, he seemed to be completely satisfied, and instructed the Duke de Friuli to compliment M. Fontaine upon his skill.

A week later came the reverse of the medal. *Cinna* was being played that evening, and a comedy of which I have forgotten the name. It was extremely cold, so that the audience had to leave the hall after the tragedy. Then it was that the Emperor lavished invectives upon the unfortunate theatre, which he declared was only fit to be burnt. M. Fontaine was summoned, and he promised to do his best to remedy all defects. Indeed, within a week, by the improved method of heating and lighting throughout, the hall was made warm and comfortable.

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For some weeks the Emperor almost exclusively busied himself with building and decorations. The first thing to attract His Majesty's attention was the triumphal arch in the Place du Carrousel, the scaffolding from which had been removed in order to let the Imperial Guard pass through on its return from Prussia. This structure was at that time almost complete, with the exception of certain bas-reliefs which had still to be added. The Emperor gazed at it for a long while from the Palace windows, and, after knitting his brows more than once, he said that it was far more like a shed than a gateway, and that what he wanted was something in the style of the Porte Saint-Denis.

After inspecting the various buildings which had either been begun or continued during his absence, His Majesty sent for M. Fontaine, and telling him all that he admired and all that he disliked, he informed him of his intentions with regard to the plans submitted by the architect for joining the Tuileries on to the Louvre. The Emperor and M. Fontaine decided that the new wing to effect a juncture should be built in five years, and that a million francs should be granted every year for this purpose. It was also agreed that another wing between the Louvre and the Tuileries should be built, a

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square being formed in the centre, where a music-room and theatre should be erected, communicating with the palace by a subterranean passage. The gallery in the entrance court of the Louvre was to be thrown open to the public in winter, and ornamented with statues and shrubs from the Tuileries gardens. In this court a triumphal arch like the Carrousel one was to be erected. Finally, all these handsome buildings were to serve as lodgings for high Court officials, &c. The cost of all this was approximately valued at forty-two millions.

The Emperor subsequently busied himself with an art museum and an Imperial library, to be built where the Bourse now stands; with a building on the Quai Desaix; with restoring the Sorbonne and the Hôtel Soubise; with a triumphal column at Neuilly; with a fountain on the Place Louis XV., &c.

All these schemes were very fine, and doubtless in time their originator would have executed them. He often said that, if he lived, Paris should be without a rival in the world. At the same time His Majesty definitely fixed the shape of the Etoile triumphal arch, which had long been a matter of debate among the leading architects. M. Fontaine's advice was acted upon after all. Of all the plans

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submitted his was the simplest as also the most grandiose.

The Emperor also contemplated restoring the Palace of Versailles. M. Fontaine had submitted to His Majesty a scheme for preliminary repairs, by which, at the cost of six millions, the Emperor and the Empress would have had a comfortable residence. His Majesty, who wanted everything done in a handsome, grand, splendid style, but economically, wrote at the foot of this plan the following note, which M. de Bausset also records in his memoirs:

"The Versailles plan must be attended to. M. Fontaine has submitted a reasonable one, costing six millions, but I do not find any lodgings specified, nor the restoration of the chapel, nor that of the theatre. No plan for their development would seem to have been made.

"According to this scheme, the Emperor and the Empress have got lodging; but that is not all—the point is to find out how many apartments for Princes, State officials, and other dignitaries could be provided for the same sum.

"One must also know where the manufactory of arms would be placed, this being necessary at Versailles, as it makes money circulate.

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"For these six millions, six suites of apartments for Princes, twelve for grand officers, and fifty for officers ought to be found. Only then could Versailles be pronounced habitable, and a place where the Court might spend the summer.

"Before executing this plan, the architect must guarantee that for the said sum this must be done."

A few days after their arrival, the Emperor and Empress paid a visit to David, the celebrated painter, in his studio at the Sorbonne, to see the famous picture of the Coronation, which had just been completed. Their Majesties' suite included Marshal Bessières, M. Lebrun, an aide-de-camp, and several chamberlains and ladies in waiting. The Emperor and Empress greatly admired the surpassing merit of this splendid picture, and the artist was delighted to hear His Majesty point out, one by one, all the famous personages depicted, each likeness being marvellously truthful.

"How grand, how beautiful it is!" exclaimed the Emperor. "How the figures stand out! how truthfully they are presented! They seem to live and move!" Then, in the centre, the Emperor recognised Madame Mère, General Beaumont, M. de Copé, M. de la Ville, Madame de Fontanges

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and Madame Soult. "Further back," said he, "I can see good M. Vien."

M. David replied, "Yes, Sire, I wished to do homage to my illustrious master by placing him in a picture which, owing to its subject, ranks as the most important of my works." Then the Empress pointed out to the Emperor how happily M. David had seized and portrayed the interesting moment when the Emperor was about to crown her. "Yes," said His Majesty, with undisguised pleasure, "the moment is happily chosen and the gesture most perfectly given; both faces are excellent." So saying, the Emperor glanced at the Empress.

Continuing to examine the picture in all its details, the Emperor specially praised the group of Italian clergy near the altar—an episode invented by the painter. His Majesty merely seemed to wish that the Pope should have been represented in the act of giving his blessing, and that the ring of the Empress should be held by the Cardinal Legate.

With regard to this group, Marshal Bessières made the Emperor laugh greatly by reminding him of an amusing discussion which took place between David and Cardinal Caprara.

The great artist, as we know, disliked painting

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figures in costume, particularly in modern costume. In all his works a strong leaning to the classical is perceptible, which led him even to drape living personages in such attire. At the Coronation Cardinal Caprara, in attendance on the Pope, wore a wig. David, having put him in his picture, deemed it fitting to remove the wig and paint him with a bald head. The Cardinal, in despair, begged the artist to restore his wig, but David formally refused. "Never," quoth he, "never will I degrade my brush by painting a wig." His Eminence angrily went to complain to M. de Talleyrand, at that time Minister for Foreign Affairs, adducing among other reasons the following one, which to him seemed incontestable, viz., that as no Pope ever wore a wig, it would at once be assumed that he (Cardinal Caprara) had pretensions to the pontifical chair when vacant; the suppression of his wig at the Coronation ceremony clearly showing this. However, it was of no avail for His Eminence to protest; David absolutely refused to paint in this precious wig, saying that the Cardinal "might think himself lucky that nothing else but that had been taken off."

After listening to the story, which in all its details was confirmed by the chief actor, His

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Majesty made sundry remarks to M. David, doing this with all possible tact. The great artist listened attentively, and, bowing, promised to profit by the Emperor's advice.

Their Majesties' visit had lasted a long while, and the closing day at last told the Emperor that it was time to go. M. David accompanied him to the door of the studio. There, stopping short, the Emperor took off his hat, saluting in most graceful fashion talent so distinguished. The Empress added to the painter's evident emotion by one of those charming little speeches which she alone knew exactly how to make.

Opposite the picture of the Coronation was that of the "Rape of the Sabines." Perceiving how anxious M. David seemed to get rid of it, the Emperor, on leaving, charged M. Lebrun to see if the last-named canvas could not conveniently be placed in the large council chamber of the Tuileries, but he soon gave up that idea, recollecting that most of the figures were represented *in naturalibus*, which would hardly suit a *salon* set apart for grand diplomatic receptions, and where Cabinet councils were usually held.

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CHAPTER II

Marriage of Mademoiselle de Tascher with the Duke d'Aremberg — Marriage of King Murat's niece with the Prince of Hohenzollern—Grand fêtes *and masked balls—The Emperor at M. de Marescalchi's ball—His disguise—Instructions to Constant—The Emperor always recognised—His pleasantries —Napoleon teased by a fair unknown—The Empress at the Opera ball—Napoleon* en domino*—Constant as his comrade —Napoleon and the mask—His explanations to Josephine— Who the mask was — Dr. Gall and the wigs — Princess Caroline's masked ball — Constant sent by the Emperor to this ball — Marriage of the Prince de Neufchâtel and a Princess of Bavaria—Present offered to the Empress—The well-bred monkey.*

AT the end of January, Mademoiselle de Tascher, the Empress's niece, was married to the Duke d'Aremberg. The Emperor on this occasion conferred the rank of Princess upon Mademoiselle de Tascher, honouring the wedding by his presence, which took place at the Queen of Holland's residence in the Rue de Cerutti. After dinner the Empress did not withdraw, but opened the ball with the Duke d'Aremberg. Some days afterwards the Prince of Hohenzollern was married to the

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niece of the Grand Duke of Berg, Mademoiselle Antoinette Murat.

His Majesty did for her that which he had done for Mademoiselle de Tascher, and with the Empress attended the ball given by the Duke de Berg to celebrate the occasion, when the honours were done by the Princess Caroline.

This winter was remarkable by reason of the many *fêtes* and balls that were given. The Emperor, as I have said, had a sort of distaste for balls, particularly for masked balls, which he considered absolutely ridiculous. It was one of the points which led to perpetual disputes with the Empress. Once, however, he yielded to the persuasions of M. de Marescalchi, the Italian ambassador, who was famous for the splendid balls that he gave, at which all the most distinguished State personages were present. These brilliant assemblies took place in a specially-constructed ball-room, which the ambassador had caused to be sumptuously decorated. His Majesty condescended to honour by his presence a masked ball that in brilliance was to eclipse all the others.

In the morning the Emperor called me and said, "Constant, I have decided to dance this evening at the Italian ambassador's. During the

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day, take ten complete costumes and place them in the room prepared for me at the embassy." I obeyed, and in the evening I went with His Majesty to M. de Marescalchi's. I dressed him as best I could in a black domino, and endeavoured to make him utterly unrecognisable. All went off very well in spite of the Emperor's repeated observations as to the absurdity of a disguise, as to the ugly figure a domino gave one, &c. But when it was a question of changing his boots, he absolutely refused in spite of all I could say. Thus, directly he entered the ball-room he was recognised. He went straight up to a mask with his hands behind his back, as was his wont. He sought to begin a flirtation, but to his very first question the fair one replied "Sire." Then, much disappointed, he abruptly turned away and came back to me. "Constant," said he, "you were right; they recognised me. Bring me other boots and a fresh costume." I laced up his boots for him and disguised him once more, urging him to let his arms hang down on each side if he did not wish to be recognised immediately. His Majesty promised to carry out to the letter all my instructions. But hardly had he gone back in his new costume than a lady seeing him with his hands crossed behind his back said, "Sire, you are recog-

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nised." The Emperor at once let his arms fall to his sides, but it was too late, everyone was already respectfully moving aside to make way for him. He again returned to his apartment and selected a third costume, promising me this time to pay great attention to his gestures and gait, offering to bet that he would not be recognised. This time, in fact, he entered the room as if it were a barrack-yard, pushing and bumping everybody; yet in spite of all this swagger someone quietly whispered in his ear, "Your Majesty is recognised." Fresh disappointment, fresh change of dress, fresh advice on my part, fresh promises, and the same result, until at last the Emperor left the embassy convinced that he could not disguise himself, and that *the Emperor* was always recognisable under any travesty whatsoever.

At supper that evening, when the Prince of Neufchâtel, the Duke of Treviso, the Duke of Friuli, and some other officers were present, the Emperor told the story of his disguises, and made very merry at all his maladroitnesses. When speaking of the young lady who first recognised him, and who, as it seems, had chaffed him unmercifully, he said, "Well, would you believe it, gentlemen, I never found out who the naughty hussy was."

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In Carnival time the Empress expressed a wish to go once to the masked ball at the opera. She asked the Emperor to take her; but he refused in spite of all her most seductive and affectionate entreaties. How winsome was her way of asking a favour is well known, yet all was in vain. The Emperor flatly declined. "Very well, then, I shall go without you." "As you please," said the Emperor, and he left the room.

That evening, at the hour fixed, the Empress went off to the ball. The Emperor, who wished to surprise her, sent for one of her waiting-women and asked for an exact description of Her Majesty's costume. Then he told me to dress him in a domino, and getting into an ordinary coach accompanied by the Grand Marshal of the Palace, a superior officer, and, myself, he set out for the opera-house. On reaching the private entrance used by members of the Imperial household, some considerable difficulty was created by the box-keeper, who would not let us pass until I had stated my name and calling.

"These gentlemen are with you, are they not?" she enquired.

"Don't you see that they are?" I retorted.

"I beg your pardon, M. Constant, but nowa-

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days, you know, there are always so many people trying to get in without paying. It's all right! It's all right!"

The Emperor was in fits of laughter at the good woman's remarks. At last we entered, and walked through the ball-room in couples, the Emperor taking my arm. He addressed me in familiar fashion as "thou," and bade me do the same to him. We all assumed fictitious names, the Emperor being "Auguste," the Duke de Friuli "François," the officer "Charles," and I "Joseph." As soon as the Emperor perceived a domino which answered to the description given by the Empress's waiting-woman, he gripped my arm and said, "Is that she?"

"No, Si— no, Auguste," I always replied, for it seemed impossible for me to get used to calling the Emperor anything but "Sire" or "Your Majesty." As I say, he expressly ordered me to use the familiar "thou," but he was every moment obliged to remind me of this command, for respect tied my tongue whenever I tried to obey it. At last, having explored in all directions—in the anterooms, in the boxes, and elsewhere—and after carefully scrutinising every costume in all its details, His Majesty could not discover the Empress

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any more than we could, and he began to grow most uneasy. Yet I managed to allay his fears by saying that no doubt Her Majesty had gone to change her costume. Just as I was speaking, a domino came up and accosted the Emperor, chattering to him and teasing him in every conceivable way, and with such vivacity that "Auguste" was positively embarrassed. I can never succeed in giving a correct idea of the comicality of such embarrassment. Aware of this, the domino became at once more mischievously pertinacious, until, seeing that it was time to stop, the mask vanished in the crowd. The Emperor was greatly annoyed; he had had quite enough of the ball, so we went home.

Next morning, on seeing the Empress, he said, "Well, you were not at the Opera ball last night?"

"Yes, indeed I was."

"Nonsense!"

"I assure that I was there. And you, dear, what did you do all the evening?"

"I was working."

"Well, do you know, it was so strange, but at the ball last night I saw a domino with feet and boots just like yours. I thought it was you, and so I went up and talked to him."

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The Emperor burst out laughing when he saw how he had been thus duped. The Empress, as it appeared, changed her costume just before going to the ball for one which she thought was more elegant.

The carnival this year was extremely brilliant. In Paris there were all kinds of masquerades. The most amusing were the caricatures of Dr. Gall's famous system. On the Place du Carrousel I saw a troupe pass of pierrots, harlequins, and clowns, all touching their heads and making a thousand grimaces. Some had large pasteboard heads, painted blue, red, and green, with the following inscriptions, "Head of a Thief," "Head of an Assassin," "Head of a Bankrupt," &c. One mask, representing Dr. Gall, was riding on a donkey, his head facing the animal's tail.

Princess Caroline gave a masked ball, at which the Emperor and Empress were present. It was one of the most splendid *fêtes* ever seen. The opera of *La Vestale* was just then in vogue, and it suggested a quadrille by priests and vestals, danced to delightful music made by flutes and harps. All the dresses were most sumptuous and scrupulously exact in all their details. Apartments filled with dresses had been reserved for the dancers, who thus could change their costumes four or five times during the

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evening, and in this way the ball was perpetually renewed.

While I was dressing the Emperor to go to this ball he said to me, "Constant, you must come with me, and you must come disguised. Take whatever dress suits you, but disguise yourself in such a way that no one can recognise you; then I will give you your instructions." I hastened to obey His Majesty's instructions, and chose a Swiss costume, which suited me vastly well. Thus disguised I awaited the Emperor's orders.

The idea was to mystify certain exalted personages, as well as two or three ladies, whom the Emperor described to me so carefully and with such minuteness of detail that it was impossible to mistake them. He told me some strange and hitherto unknown facts concerning them, which were well calculated to discomfit them intensely. I was just leaving when the Emperor called me back. "Above all, Constant," said he, "be very careful not to make a mistake. Don't confuse Madame de M—— with her sister. They are both wearing much the same costume, but Madame de M—— is taller than her sister. Take care what you're about!"

On getting to the ball I easily discovered the persons designated by His Majesty, and their replies

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to my questions amused him mightily when I told him of these at bedtime.

At this period a third wedding took place at Court; it was that of the Prince de Neufchâtel and the Princess of Bavaria. It was solemnised in the Chapel of the Tuileries by Cardinal Fesch.

A traveller from the Ile de France about this time presented the Empress with a female ape belonging to the ourang-outang species. His Majesty gave orders for it to be placed in the menagerie at La Malmaison. The brute was extremely docile and gentle, as it had been excellently trained. When anyone went near the chair on which it sat it was amusing to see it put on modest airs, covering its legs and thighs with the tails of a long overcoat, and when rising to bow holding the coat closed in front, just like some well-mannered young lady. At table it ate with a knife and fork in far cleaner fashion than many children who pass for being well bred. When eating it liked to put the napkin over its head, and then when uncovering it uttered a scream of delight. Turnips were its favourite food, and when one of the Court ladies showed it some it began to run, skip, and turn somersaults, entirely forgetting the lessons in modesty and decorum taught to it by its master. The Empress laughed loudly

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when the monkey danced about with its clothes disarranged like this.

The poor brute suffered from inflammation of the bowels. According to the instructions given by its master, it was put to bed in a chemise and dressing-jacket like a woman. It was careful to keep the coverlet close up to its chin, and would not have anything on its head, holding its arms outside the bedclothes, and putting its hands in the sleeves of its jacket. If someone it knew came into the room it nodded in sign of welcome, and shook the person's hand affectionately. It greedily drank the potions prescribed by the physician, these being sweetened. One day a potion of manna was being prepared for the monkey, who, thinking they were too slow about it, showed all the impatience of a child, crying, shaking itself, throwing off the coverlet, and finally pulling the doctor's coat-tails so persistently that he had to give in. Directly it had got the longed-for cup it began to drink the contents, sipping it slowly, with all the sensuous gusto of some epicure tasting some old wine of rare bouquet. Then it handed back the cup and lay down again. It is impossible to conceive how grateful the poor animal was for all the care and kindness bestowed upon it. The Empress was very fond of it.

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CHAPTER III

Journey of the Emperor and Empress—Stay at Bordeaux and Bayonne—Arrival of the Infant of Spain, Don Carlos—His illness—The Castle of Marrac—Basque dances and costumes—Letter from the Prince of the Asturias—The Emperor's surprise—The Prince enters Bayonne—Interview with the Emperor—Dinner of the Spanish grandees—Napoleon and Prince Ferdinand—The Empress at Marrac—Arrival of the King and Queen of Spain—Ominous story told to the Prince of the Asturias—He is badly received by his father—The Emperor and the King of Spain—Manuel Godoï—His sufferings in prison—The King and Queen of Spain—Personal characteristics—Taciturnity of the Prince of the Asturias—The King's affection for Godoï—Charles IV.'s passion for clocks—When old, he studies the violin—Arrival at Bayonne of Joseph Bonaparte—He is complimented by the Giunta—M. de Cevallos and the Duke de l'Infantado.

AFTER staying a week at Saint-Cloud, on the 2nd of April, at eleven o'clock in the morning, His Majesty left "on a tour of inspection in the southern departments," beginning with Bordeaux, where he was to meet the Empress. This public announcement was merely a subterfuge; we at Court all knew that we were going to the Spanish frontier.

The Emperor scarcely stayed ten days at

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Bordeaux, and set out for Bayonne by himself, leaving the Empress at Bordeaux. He reached Bayonne on the night of the 14th of April, where the Empress rejoined him two or three days later. The Prince of Neufchâtel and the Grand Marshal lodged at the Château de Marrac, the rest of the suite being quartered in Bayonne and its environs. The guard of honour encamped opposite the Château, and in three days everybody was comfortably installed.

On the morning of the 15th of April, when he had hardly recovered from the fatigues of the journey, the Emperor received the Bayonne authorities, who came to pay their respects, and whom, as usual, he subjected to detailed questioning. His Majesty afterwards went out to visit the port and the fortifications, and this tour of inspection lasted until five p.m., when he returned to the Government Palace, his temporary residence until the Château of Marrac was ready for his reception.

On reaching the palace His Majesty expected to meet the Infant, Don Carlos, whom Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, his brother, had deputed to convey his compliments to the Emperor. His Majesty, however, was told that the Infant was ill, and could not leave his residence. The Emperor

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at once ordered a Court physician and other attendants to be placed at the Prince's disposal, the latter having come to Bayonne without a suite, and almost *incognito*, being only attended by a few soldiers from the garrison. These the Emperor caused to be replaced in most distinguished style by his own guard of honour. He sent regularly twice or thrice a day to enquire as to the Prince's health, who, as they openly said at Court, was merely malingering.

On leaving the Government Palace for Marrac, the Emperor gave orders for every preparation to be made for receiving the King and Queen of Spain, who were expected at Bayonne towards the close of the month. His Majesty insisted that all should be done with despatch, and that to the Spanish sovereigns all honour befitting their exalted rank should be shown.

The Emperor had just entered the Château, when suddenly the sound of rustic music reached his ears. The Grand Marshal informed His Majesty that several townsfolk in country dress had assembled outside the Château. The Emperor at once went to the window, where he saw seventeen people, seven men and ten women, dancing with inimitable grace the *pamperruque*, a sprightly dance. The women had

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tambourines, and the men castanets, the orchestra being composed of flutes and guitars. I went out of doors in order to get a better view. The women wore short blue silk skirts embroidered with silver, and pink stockings also embroidered with silver; as head-dress they wore ribbons, and had large black bracelets, which heightened the whiteness of their bare arms. The men wore tight-fitting white breeches with silk stockings, red woollen vests embroidered with gold, and head-gear of the Spanish sort.

His Majesty was charmed to witness this dance, an ancient one, characteristic of the country, and a customary compliment paid to great personages. The Emperor remained at the window until the *pamperruque* was over, when he sent a message complimenting the dancers, and thanking the townsfolk, who had congregated in crowds.

A few days afterwards His Majesty received a letter from the Prince of the Asturias, informing him that he would soon leave Irun in order to have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of "his brother" (it was thus that Prince Ferdinand alluded to the Emperor), a privilege that he had long desired, and which, "if his good brother allowed him," he was now about to enjoy. This letter was

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consigned to His Majesty by one of the Prince's aides-de-camp, who had accompanied him as far as Madrid, and who had preceded him by ten days. The Emperor could scarcely believe what he read. I heard him exclaim, and others did so, too, "What? He is coming here? Why, you must be mistaken; he is deceiving us! It is not possible!" I can certify that, when speaking thus, the Emperor did not feign astonishment.

Preparations had accordingly to be made for the Prince's reception, since obviously he was coming. The Prince of Neufchâtel, the Duke de Friuli and a chamberlain were sent to meet the Spanish Prince, accompanied by a guard of honour, but only as far as the outskirts of Bayonne, for the rank of the Prince as recognised by the Emperor, did not allow of the *cortége* going as far as the frontier of the two Empires.

It was at noon on the 20th of April that the Prince entered Bayonne. A residence which, if insignificant in Paris, was handsome for Bayonne, was prepared for him and his brother, Don Carlos, who was already installed there. On entering, Prince Ferdinand made a wry face, but he dared not complain aloud, and truly it would have been very improper of him to do so. It was not the

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Emperor's fault if there was only one palace at Bayonne, to wit, the Government Palace, which he had formerly occupied, and which was being reserved for the King. Besides, the Prince's house was the finest in the town, and quite new. Don Pedro de Cevallos, who accompanied the Prince, thought the place horrible and quite unworthy of a Royal tenant. An hour after Ferdinand's arrival, the Emperor came to pay him a visit, and found him waiting at the street door. He stretched out his arms at His Majesty's approach, who embraced him, and they went upstairs together. They remained together about half an hour, and on separating I thought the Prince looked somewhat careworn.

On returning to Marrac, the Emperor instructed the Grand Marshal to invite the Prince and his brother with their suite to dinner. The Imperial carriages were placed at the disposal of the illustrious guests, whom His Majesty welcomed at the threshold of the Castle. This was the limit of the honour shown to them. During dinner the Emperor never once addressed Prince Ferdinand, who in Madrid was a King, as "Your Majesty"; not even as "Your Highness"; and, when he was leaving, the Emperor only accompanied him as far as the

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drawing-room door. He afterwards sent him word that he would only be treated as Prince of the Asturias until the arrival of his father, King Charles. Orders to provide him with a military guard of honour were given at the same time.

On the 27th of April, in the evening, the Empress arrived at Bordeaux. Her arrival excited but little enthusiasm, possibly because she did not stop, but went straight through to Bayonne. The Emperor received her most affectionately, and enquired with much solicitude as to the fatigues of the journey, the roads being in a dreadful state owing to the heavy rains. In the evening the town and Castle were illuminated.

Three days afterwards, on the 30th, the King and Queen of Spain arrived at Bayonne. It is impossible to imagine the care and attention bestowed upon them by the Emperor. Duke Charles de Plaisance went to Irun, and the Prince de Neufchâtel to the banks of the Bidassoa, to compliment their Catholic Majesties on the part of their puissant friend. The King and Queen seemed highly to appreciate such marks of consideration. A detachment of picked troops, superbly turned out, awaited them at the frontier, and acted as escort. There was a parade of the garrison troops at Bayonne;

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all the houses in the port displayed flags; all the bells rang joyous peals; and salutes were fired from the several forts.

The Prince of the Asturias and his brother went to meet their parents. A little way out of the town they encountered two or three of the guards coming from Vittoria, who told them of the following incident:

When Their Majesties of Spain entered Vittoria a detachment of a hundred Spanish guards who had escorted the Prince of the Asturias were in this town, and had taken up their quarters in the palace which the King and Queen were to occupy. When Their Majesties arrived the troops paraded. As soon as the King saw them he said in a severe tone, "You will be good enough to quit my palace immediately; you betrayed your trust at Aranjuez. I have no further need of your services; so begone!" These words, uttered with unlooked-for vehemence, were unanswerable. The body-guard withdrew, and the King asked General Verdier to furnish him with an escort of French troops; being vexed, so he said, that he had not kept his brave carbineers, the colonel of whom formed one of his suite.

This news did not lead the Prince of the Asturias to expect a very cordial reception from his august

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parent. In fact, it was the reverse of gracious, as I am about to relate.

On alighting from their carriage at the Government Palace, the King and Queen of Spain were met by Grand Marshal the Duc de Friuli, who conducted them to their apartments, and presented General Count Reille, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, who was to act as governor of the palace; M. d'Audenarde being equerry, and M. Dumanoir and M. de Baral chamberlains in attendance upon Their Majesties.

The Spanish grandees that the King and Queen found at Bayonne were the same that formed the suite of the Prince of the Asturias. Their presence, as may well be imagined, was hardly pleasing to the King, and during the ceremony of kissing hands everyone noticed the painful emotion of these hapless sovereigns. The ceremony, which consists in kneeling down and kissing the hands of the King and Queen, was performed in perfect silence. Their Majesties only spoke to the Comte de Fuentes, who happened to be at Bayonne. The King hurried over the ceremony, which tired him dreadfully, and then withdrew with the Queen to his apartments. The Prince of the Asturias sought to follow them, but his father stopped him at the door, and, pushing

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him back, said in a trembling voice, "Prince, would you yet further dishonour my grey hairs?" At these words the Prince seemed thunderstruck, and withdrew, abashed and speechless.

Far different was the reception accorded by Their Majesties to the Prince de la Paix when he joined them at Bayonne. One would have thought he was their nearest and dearest kinsman. On meeting they all three shed tears in abundance; so at least I was told by one of the servants, from whom also I had the foregoing facts.

At five o'clock the Emperor paid a visit to the King and Queen of Spain. At this interview the latter told His Majesty of the outrageous treatment to which for a month they had been subjected. They bitterly complained of the ingratitude of those whom they had loaded with benefits; above all, they reproached the body-guard with base treachery. "Your Majesty," said the King, "does not know what it is to complain of a son; and may Heaven prevent you from ever experiencing such a misfortune. My son is the cause of all our troubles!"

The Prince de la Paix came to Bayonne, accompanied by Colonel Martès, aide-de-camp to Prince Murat, and a valet, the only servant who remained true to him. I had an opportunity of chatting to

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this faithful servant, who spoke French very well, having been at a school near Toulouse. He told me that he had failed to obtain permission to stay with his master during his captivity; and that this unfortunate Prince had suffered inconceivable torments. Not a day passed but the gaoler came to his dungeon to bid him prepare for death, as he was to be executed either that evening or the following morning. Sometimes the prisoner was left for thirty hours without food; his bed was only a heap of straw; he had no linen, no books, no light, no communication with the outer world. When brought out of his dungeon and given over to Colonel Martès' charge he was a frightful sight, owing to his long, straggling beard and lean, cadaverous appearance, due to mental anguish and foul food. He had not changed his shirt for a whole month; his eyes were unused to the light of day, and at first he had to close them on getting into the outer air.

On the road to Bayonne a letter was handed to the Prince from the King and Queen, a paper stained with tears. After reading it, the Prince said to his valet, "This is the sole consolation that I have had for a month; everyone forsakes me except my excellent masters. The body-guards who betrayed and sold their King will also betray and sell his son.

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As for me, I hope for nothing further, if only I may be suffered to find a place of shelter in France for my children and myself." When M. Martès showed a statement made by the public press, to the effect that the Prince possessed a fortune of five hundred millions, he loudly denounced such an atrocious calumny and defied his cruellest enemies to furnish a proof of this.

As may be noted, Their Majesties had not a numerous suite, but, on the other hand, they brought with them van-loads of furniture, stuffs and other articles of value. Their carriages were of old-fashioned make, yet they suited Their Majesties excellently well, especially the King; and he was much embarrassed at having to get into one of the new-fangled coaches with two steps. He seemed timid to set his foot on so frail a support, while the rocking movement made him sorely afraid of being overset.

It was at table that I got my chance of scrutinising the King and the Queen. The King was of medium height, not handsome, but benevolent-looking, long-nosed, and of curt, loud speech. He smirked along in most unmajestic style; possibly this was due to gout. Of all served to him he ate freely, with the exception of vegetables. These he

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never touched, saying that they were "only fit for beasts." He only drank water, two decanters, one with ice in it, being set beside him, and he helped himself from both. The Emperor bade them be careful to serve a choice dinner, knowing that the King was somewhat of an epicure. He did Royal justice to French cooking, which, seemingly, was much to his taste, for at every course he said to the Queen, "Try some of this, Louise, it's so good." The Emperor, whose abstemiousness is well known, was greatly amused.

The Queen was short and fat, very badly dressed and devoid of shapeliness or grace of any kind. Her face was flushed, and her expression proud and hard. She carried her head high, and spoke very loud, in abrupter, shriller tones even than her husband. It was generally said that she had more character and more resource than he.

Before dinner that day there was some talk about dress. The Empress suggested that her hairdresser, M. Duplan, should give the Queen's ladies-in-waiting sundry lessons in the French style of doing the hair. The proposal was accepted, and ere long the Queen left M. Duplan's hands better dressed, no doubt, and better *coiffée*, but no whit beautified, since the hairdresser's art cannot achieve so much as this.

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The Prince of the Asturias, to-day King Ferdinand VII., had an ungracious exterior; he was heavy of gait, depressed in manner, and he rarely or never spoke. Their Majesties of Spain had brought with them the Prince de la Paix, whom the Emperor had not invited, and whom for that reason the equerry on duty detained outside the dining-room. However, just as all were sitting down to table, the King noticed that the Prince was absent. "Where is Manuel?" he sharply enquired of the Emperor. "Where is Manuel, Sire?" Smilingly the Emperor made a sign, and Don Manuel Godoï was ushered in. It is said that he was a very good-looking man; he did not appear to be so, however. Perhaps this may have been due to all the shocking hardships which had wrecked his health.

After the abdication of the Princes, the King and Queen, the Queen of Etruria and Don Francisco left Bayonne for Fontainebleau, where the Emperor had arranged that they should reside, until the château of Compiègne was ready for their reception. The Prince of the Asturias left the same day with his brother, Don Carlos, and his uncle, Don Antonio, for Valençay, an estate belonging to the Prince of Benevento. In passing through Bor-

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deaux they issued a manifesto to the Spanish people, in which they stated that they had made over all their rights to the Emperor Napoleon.

Thus it came about that King Charles, being quit of a throne which he had ever deemed too heavy a burden, could henceforth devote himself unrestrainedly to his favourite pastimes. All that he cared for in the whole world were clocks, watches, music, and the Prince de la Paix. After what had happened, the latter could never go back to Spain; indeed, how could the King possibly bear to part with him even if the memory of past indignities had not proved sufficient to disgust him with the bonds of sovereignty? The life of an ordinary private person was the life that best suited him, and he was far happier when he could freely follow his own simple, innocent tastes. On his arrival at Fontainebleau, M. de Remusat, first chamberlain, received him as well as a complete suite. Madame de la Rochefoucault, Madame Duchâtel, and Madame de Luçay, had been appointed by the Emperor to act as ladies-in-waiting to the Queen.

The King only stayed at Fontainebleau until Compiègne was ready for him. He found the climate of this part of France too cold, and after

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some months went to Marseilles with the Queen, Don Francisco, and the Prince de la Paix. In 1811, as he was still unwell at Marseilles, he left France for Italy and took up his residence at Rome.

Just now I mentioned the Spanish King's fondness for watches and clocks. At Fontainebleau I am told that he made his valet wear half-a-dozen watches, while he wore as many himself, alleging as a reason that watches get out of order if they are not worn. I was also told that he always had his confessor in an ante-room, or in an adjoining apartment, and when he wished to speak to him he whistled for him, as one would for a dog. This Royal summons the priest never failed to obey, and followed his penitent to the embrasure of a window, where the King forthwith relieved his conscience of its burden, received absolution, and sent away his confessor until such time as he felt obliged to whistle him back again.

When this monarch's health, weakened by age and gout, no longer permitted him to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, he took to playing the violin more zealously than ever, saying that he wished "to perfect himself." It was rather late to begin. As first violin he had the famous

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Alexander Boucher. The King was fond of playing with him, but he had a mania for beginning first, caring nothing whatever about keeping time. If ever M. Boucher ventured to remonstrate, the King would coolly reply, "Sir, I can hardly be supposed to wait for you."

On the 7th of June, Joseph Bonaparte arrived at Bayonne. It had long been an open secret that his brother had summoned him thither in order to exchange the crown of Naples for that of Spain. The same evening that King Joseph arrived, the Emperor invited all the members of the Junta (who had come from all parts of Spain to Bayonne during the past fortnight) to meet at the Château de Marrac in order to welcome their new King. The deputies obeyed this somewhat brusque invitation without having had time to settle among themselves what they would do. On arriving at Marrac, the Emperor presented their new monarch to them, whom they recognised, after violent opposition on the part of the Duke de l'Infantado only, in the name of the Spanish grandees. As for the deputies from the Council of Castile, the Inquisition and the Army, they submitted without the slightest demur. A few days later the King formed his ministry, in which it was astonishing to find M. de Cevallos included,

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who had accompanied the Prince of the Asturias to Bayonne, and professed such inviolable attachment to the person of him he called his unfortunate master. Again, the Duke de l'Infantado, who had so strenuously opposed the recognition of this foreign monarch, was appointed captain of the guard. The King at once set out for Madrid, after nominating the Grand Duke de Berg to the post of Lieutenant-general of the realm.

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CHAPTER IV

Death of the Archbishop of Paris—The executioner's daughter—The Duke de Berg returns from Spain—The Court leaves Marrac—The Emperor distributes jewelled snuff-boxes—Souvenir of Egypt—The Pyramid and the Mamelukes—The dancers—The Emperor visits the Grand Duke—Useless preparations—The oldest soldier of France—The centenarian—The Emperor's tribute to old age—Arrival at Saint-Cloud—The Emperor is vexed—Napoleon and the god Mars—The Persian ambassador—Asker-Khan's generosity—The sabres of Tamerlane and Kouli-Khan—Persian gallantry—Asker-Khan's taste for the arts and sciences—The long price and the short one—Calico preferred to cashmere—The Sophi's arms and the Emperor's monogram—Asker-Khan at the Imperial Library—Portrait of the Sophi—The Grand Order of the Sun given to the Prince of Benevento—Asker-Khan's tumble—M. de Barbe-Marbois.

ABOUT this time news reached Bayonne of the death of M. de Belloy, archbishop of Paris, who died of catarrh when over ninety-eight years of age. The day after learning the sad news, the Emperor, who was sincerely grieved, spoke of the venerable prelate's great and noble qualities. His Majesty said how he had once thoughtlessly remarked to M. de Belloy, then over ninety-six, that he would

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live for a century. At which the good archbishop laughingly exclaimed, "Why, does Your Majesty wish me to live only four years longer?"

I remember hearing the following story about another prelate, the Archbishop of Genoa, for whom the Emperor professed the utmost respect. The wife of the public executioner of Genoa gave birth to a daughter, who could not be baptised since nobody would stand sponsor. In vain the father begged and entreated the few people he knew to act in that capacity. He even offered them money, but in vain. The poor little infant thus remained unbaptised for four or five months, its health meanwhile giving no cause for anxiety. The strange story at last reached the ears of the archbishop, who was much concerned, and complained that he had not been told sooner. He instantly caused the child to be brought, baptised it at his own palace, and himself stood godfather.

At the beginning of July the Grand Duke de Berg returned from Spain, fatigued, unwell, and in a bad humour. He only stopped two or three days, and had about as many interviews with the Emperor, who seemed no better pleased with him than he was with His Majesty. The Duke then left for Barèges.

Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress left

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the château of Marrac on the 20th of July at six o'clock in the evening. This journey of the Emperor proved one of the most expensive as regarded snuff-boxes set in brilliants, which His Majesty distributed with no niggard hand.

Their Majesties arrived at Pau on the 22nd, at ten o'clock in the morning. They stopped at the Château Gelos, situated on the banks of the river. The day was given up to receptions and excursions on horseback. The Emperor went to see the château where the first King of the House of Bourbon was brought up, and was much interested by this visit, which lasted until the dinner-hour.

On the border of the Departement des Hautes Pyrénées, just in the most barren, desolate spot, a verdurous triumphal arch had been erected, which seemed like a marvel fallen from heaven in the midst of all those arid, sunburnt lands. A guard of honour was stationed at its base, the officer in command being the veteran Marshal de Noé, who was over ninety years of age. This worthy officer at once took up his position beside the Royal carriage, and for a day and two nights remained on duty in the saddle without experiencing the slightest fatigue.

Further along, on the plateau of a hill, we found a stone pyramid, forty or fifty feet high, covered

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with inscriptions in praise of Their Majesties. Some thirty children, dressed as Mamelukes, guarded this monument, which reminded the Emperor of glorious bygone triumphs. When Their Majesties appeared we saw a troop of dancers rush out of an adjoining wood, dressed in picturesque costumes. They carried banners of different colours, and, in sprightly, vigorous fashion, commenced to dance the traditional dance of the southern mountaineers.

Near the town of Tarbes there was an artificial mountain, planted with pines, and this opened to let the Royal procession pass. It was surmounted by an Imperial eagle holding a scroll with the inscription, "He will open our Pyrenees." On arriving at Tarbes, the Emperor at once got on horseback and rode off to visit the Grand Duke de Berg, who was lying ill in one of the suburbs. We left the next morning without seeing Barèges and Bagnères, where a most brilliant reception had been prepared for Their Majesties.

When passing through Agen, a worthy man named Printemps, aged one hundred and fourteen years, was presented to the Emperor. He had served under Louis Quatorze, Louis Quinze, and Louis Seize. Bowed though he was by age, on entering the Emperor's presence he gently pushed

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aside his two grandsons who were supporting him, saying, half pettishly, that he could walk quite well by himself. Profoundly touched, the Emperor went to meet him half-way, and graciously bent over the old man, who, kneeling down, bared his white head and stammered out, "Ah, Sire, I was so afraid that I should die before I had seen you." The Emperor, raising him up, led him to a chair, and himself placed him in it. Then he sat down beside him on another chair which he motioned me to bring. "I am glad to see you, father Printemps," said he; "very glad indeed. You have lately heard me talked about, eh?" (His Majesty had granted the good old fellow a pension which should afterwards revert to his wife.) Printemps placed his hand on his heart and said, "Yes, I have indeed." The Emperor enjoyed hearing him speak of his campaigning days, and after a long interview bade him farewell and made him a present of fifty napoleons.

A soldier was also presented to Their Majesties, a native of Agen, who as a result of the Egyptian expedition had lost his eyesight. The Emperor gave him 300 francs and promised him a pension, which subsequently the veteran received.

The day after their arrival at Saint-Cloud, the

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Emperor and the Empress went to Paris to take part in the festivities of the 15th of August. I need not add that these were of a most splendid kind. Immediately he reached the Tuileries the Emperor went all over the palace to inspect the various alterations and embellishments which had been made during his absence. As was his wont he had more blame than praise to give. Looking out of the windows of the Marshals' Hall, he asked M. de Fleurien, governor of the palace, why the top of the Carrousel triumphal arch was covered with cloths. The reply was that preparations were being made for placing the statue in the triumphal car drawn by the famous bronze horses of Corinth,[1] and also for the two statues of Victory which were to drive the steeds in question. "What?" cried the Emperor, angrily, "I don't want to have that! I never said anything of the sort—never asked for such a thing at all!"

Then, turning to M. Fontaine, he continued, "Monsieur Fontaine, in your design submitted to me was there a statue of me?"

"No, Sire, it was that of the god Mars."

"Very well, then; why am I to replace the god Mars?"

1 Stolen by Napoleon from the Venetians.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

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"Sire, it was not I, it was the Director-General of Museums who——"

"The Director-General was quite wrong, then," exclaimed His Majesty impatiently. "I wish that statue to be removed, do you hear? I wish it to be taken down—it's positively indecent. Whoever heard of such a thing as of my putting up statues of myself! Let the chariot and the figures of Victory be finished, but let the chariot—let the chariot remain empty!"

This order was accordingly executed, and the statue of the Emperor was removed and concealed in the Orangery, where, possibly, it is now. It was of gilt metal, very handsomely modelled, and extremely like His Majesty.

The Sunday after his arrival, the Emperor received at the Tuileries, Asker-Khan, the Persian Ambassador. M. Jaubert was in attendance as interpreter. This accomplished Oriental scholar had been instructed to receive His Excellency at the French frontier, accompanied by M. Outrey, French vice-consul at Bagdad. Later on, the Ambassador had a second audience of a more official kind at the palace of Saint-Cloud.

Asker-Khan was a tall, handsome man, with regular features and of pleasant, noble mien. His

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polished, graceful manners, especially to ladies, savoured somewhat of French gallantry. His suite, consisting of picked men, all splendidly attired, numbered over three hundred on quitting Erzeroum, but the many difficulties of the journey had obliged him to leave the greater part behind. Yet even when thus reduced, it was one of the largest suites ever brought by any ambassador to France. His Excellency resided in the Rue de Fréjus, at the house formerly tenanted by Mademoiselle de Conti. The presents which his Sovereign had charged him to offer to the Emperor were of the most costly kind. They included more than eighty cashmere shawls of various patterns, quantities of pearls of different sizes, some being enormous, an Oriental bridle with bit attached, enchased with pearls, turquoises, emeralds and other jewels, and, last of all, the sabre of Tamerlane and that of Thamas Kouli-Khan. The former was encrusted with pearls and jewels, while the latter was very simply mounted, the blades of both being of the finest steel with gold arabesques upon them.

It was at this time that I was able to glean various interesting details concerning the Ambassador. He was of gentle disposition, full of kindly consideration for those who visited him, giving the ladies attar

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of roses, and the gentlemen tobacco, pipes and scent. He liked comparing French jewels with those that he had brought from his own country. Indeed, his gallantry sometimes led him to propose to some of the ladies an exchange, which would always have been advantageous to them; and if they declined he was much distressed. When a pretty woman came to see him, he smilingly listened to her in a sort of mute ecstasy, and then eagerly bade her be seated, placing cushions and carpets under her feet. He used to wash his face, hands and beard before everybody without the least embarrassment, sitting down to perform this operation, while a slave, kneeling, held a porcelain bowl.

The Ambassador was much interested in art and science; indeed, he himself was a most learned man. There was a school next to his house kept by MM. Dubois and Loyseau, which he often visited. He was particularly interested in the classes for physical science, and the questions which he asked through his interpreter showed that he had considerable knowledge of electricity. The dealers in curios and antiquities were very fond of him, as he always bought of them without haggling overmuch. One day, however, being in want of a telescope, he sent for a famous optician,

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who thought he could make an enormous overcharge. But Asker-Khan, after examining the instrument which he found quite suitable, said through his interpreter, "You've told me your *long* price; now tell me your *short* one."

He particularly admired the Jouy calicoes, which in texture, colour and design he thought preferable to cashmere, and he bought a quantity in order to send this to Persia as a model.

On the Emperor's fête-day, His Excellency gave an Oriental entertainment in the grounds of his residence. The Persian musicians attached to the Embassy sang warlike songs in a wonderfully vigorous and original fashion. There was a display of fireworks, among them being a set-piece showing the Sophi's arms and Napoleon's monogram.

His Excellency paid a visit to the Imperial Library, M. Jaubert acting as interpreter, when he was struck by the order in which the huge collection of books was kept. He stopped for half an hour in the manuscript department, the MSS. interesting him greatly, many of which he recognised as having been copied by famous Persian scholars. He was particularly struck by a copy of the Koran, and when examining this, he said that "there was not a man in all Persia who would not sell his

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children in order to gain such a treasure." On leaving the Library Asker-Khan presented his compliments to the curators and promised to enrich the Library with several rare MSS. which he had brought with him from Persia.

Some days afterwards Asker-Khan visited the Museum. A portrait of the Shah of Persia, his master, made a great impression upon him; and he was at a loss how to express his delight when several proof engravings of this picture were presented to him. Historical subjects, particularly battle-pictures, at once engrossed his entire attention. He stopped for a whole quarter of an hour before "The Surrender of Vienna."

On reaching the end of the Apollo gallery, Asker-Khan sat down to rest himself, asked for a pipe, and began to smoke. When he had finished, he rose, and seeing several ladies about him whom curiosity had drawn thither, he paid them, through M. Jaubert, several most flattering compliments. His Excellency then went for a walk in the Tuileries, where he was soon followed by a huge crowd. It was on this day that, on the part of the Shah, His Excellency presented the Prince of Benevento with the Grand Order of the Sun, a magnificent decoration, consisting of a diamond

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sun with a red ribbon attached covered with pearls.

Asker-Khan made more sensation in Paris than did the Turkish Ambassador. He was more generous, more gallant, paid his addresses with more grace, and conformed more easily to French ways and customs. The Turk was irascible, sulky and austere, while the Persian liked a joke as well as anybody. Once, however, he grew crimson with anger, and it must be admitted that there was good cause for this.

It was at a concert given in the Empress Josephine's apartments. Asker-Khan, though scarcely diverted by the music, at first began to applaud, rolling his eyes and making various gestures. Nature at last triumphed over politeness and the Ambassador fell fast asleep. The attitude of His Excellency, however, was scarcely one to induce slumber, for he was standing with his back to the wall, and with both feet propped against a chair occupied by a lady.

Some of the Palace officials thought that it would be fun suddenly to remove Asker-Khan's support. The thing was only too easy to do. The lady was let into the secret, who, at a given signal, suddenly vacated her chair, which slid along the parquet floor,

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and the Ambassador would have fallen full length if he had not just managed to save himself by clutching wildly at those next to him, at the furniture and the hangings, making a dreadful noise. The officials who had played this practical joke begged him, with a gravity that was exquisitely comic, to be seated in an armchair, so as to avoid the repetition of such a mishap; while the lady, their accomplice, had the greatest difficulty in smothering her laughter, His Excellency looking very wrathful, to judge by his face and gestures.

Another of Asker-Khan's exploits was long talked about at Court. Feeling ill for some days, he thought that French medicine would cure him quicker than Persian remedies, so he sent for M. Bourdois, one of the cleverest doctors in Paris, of whom he had heard, being always careful to know about all our celebrated men. By a curious blunder, it was not Dr. Bourdois who was requested to visit the Ambassador professionally, but the President of the Bankruptcy Court, M. Marbois, who was astonished that His Excellency should do him such honour, not perceiving that there could be any cause for such a summons. However, he eagerly hastened to respond to it, and hardly had he entered the room than the Ambassador held out his hand and put out his

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tongue, staring at him all the while. M. Marbois was somewhat astonished at his reception, yet thinking that probably this was the Oriental manner of saluting magistrates, he made a low bow and courteously grasped the proffered hand. He was still in this respectful posture when four of the Ambassador's servants thrust under his nose a gold vase, the contents of which were unmistakeable. This rite M. Marbois managed to recognise, and recoiled in great surprise and indignation, asking to know the reason of such extraordinary behaviour.

Hearing himself styled doctor, he exclaimed, "Doctor? Doctor? What do you mean?"

"Yes, yes, Dr. Bourdois, of course."

Then it was plain to him. The similarity in the ending of his name and that of the famous physician had occasioned this distinctly unpleasant visit.

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CHAPTER V

The colossal statue in the Place Vendôme—The Emperor's last game at prisoners' base—Departure for Erfurt—Imperial quarters—Erfurt garrison—French players at Erfurt—The Emperor's dislike of Madame Talma—Mademoiselle Bourgoin—The Emperor's advice to the Czar—He enters Erfurt—The Czar's arrival—His attentions to the Duke de Montebello—Meeting of Napoleon and the Czar—They enter Erfurt—They dine together every day—Their intimacy—Napoleon's gift to the Czar—The Emperor of Russia makes Constant a present—The Czar's toilette—Exchange of gifts—The three pelisses—Princess Pauline and her admirer—The Emperor's anger—M. de Canouville is exiled.

Soon after the Emperor's fête-day the colossal bronze statue to be placed on the Vendôme column was removed from M. Launay's studio. The brewers of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine offered the use of their finest horses to draw the car carrying the statue. Of these twelve were chosen, each brewer contributing one, and the owners wished to ride them themselves. Nothing was so strange as this procession, which reached the square at five o'clock in the afternoon, followed by an enormous crowd shouting, "Long live the Emperor!"

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Some days before his departure for Erfurt, the Emperor, the Empress and their intimate friends played at prisoners' base for the last time. It was at night-time, and footmen carried torches and followed the players whenever they ran into the dark. The Emperor fell once when running after the Empress and was made prisoner, but soon managed to get free again. Then he went on running for a while until he was tired, when he went away, taking Josephine with him, in spite of the protests of the other players. Thus ended the last game at prisoners' base that ever I saw His Majesty play.

It had been decided that the Czar and the Emperor Napoleon should meet at Erfurt on the 27th of November, and most of the Sovereigns forming the confederation of the Rhine had been invited to be present at what promised to be a grand and brilliant meeting. Accordingly, the Duke de Friuli, Grand Marshal of the Palace, despatched M. de Canouville, M. de Beausset and two subordinates in advance, with instructions to prepare the necessary quarters for the illustrious travellers.

The Government Palace was chosen for the Emperor Napoleon, which was sufficiently spacious to accommodate the Court which he intended to

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hold there. For the Czar, M. Triebel's residence was got ready, the prettiest house in the town, while the Grand Duke Constantine was to stay at Senator Remann's. Other houses were placed at the disposal of the several members of the suite. Some of the splendid furniture from the Tuileries was moved thither, including Gobelin and Savonne tapestry, bronzes, lustres, candelabra, girandoles and Sèvres porcelain; in short, everything requisite to provide for the sumptuous furnishing of both palaces, many skilled workmen being sent from Paris to put things in order.

General Oudinot was appointed Governor of Erfurt, who had command of the 1st regiment of hussars, the 6th cuirassiers and the 17th light infantry; these formed the garrison. Twenty picked gendarmes, with a battalion made up of the finest gendarmes of the guard, were chosen for sentry duty at the two Imperial Palaces.

The Emperor, who sought to make this meeting at Erfurt as agreeable as possible to the Sovereigns for whom, at Tilsit, he had conceived warm regard, thought it would be a good idea to give performances of the best French plays. No doubt this was the most delightful method of entertainment that he could possibly have devised. He therefore gave

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orders for the Court theatre to be embellished and repaired, the managing director being M. Dazincourt, who left Paris with a company that included MM. Talma, Lafon, Saint-Prix, Damas, Desprès, Varennes and Lacave, and Mesdames Duchesnois, Raucourt, Talma, Bourgoin, Rose, Dupuis, Gros and Patrat. All arrangements were completed before the Royalties arrived.

Napoleon could not bear Madame Talma, though as an actress she had remarkable talent. For this well-known aversion of his no motive could possibly be assigned. At first it was intended to exclude her from the company of artists going to Erfurt, but at her husband's repeated request she was allowed to come. What he had foreseen then came to pass, viz., that when the Emperor saw her act once he was much annoyed at her having been allowed to come, and cancelled her name from the list of performers.

Mademoiselle Bourgoin, at that time young and extremely pretty, had far more success at first. It must also be averred that to achieve such success her methods differed widely from those of Madame Talma. As soon as she appeared on the Erfurt stage she provoked admiration and won homage from all the illustrious spectators.

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This marked preference begot jealousy, which greatly pleased the fair lady herself, and which in every possible way she sought to stimulate. When not acting she would sit among the audience magnificently dressed, when every eye was turned upon her and the stage was disregarded, much to the annoyance of the actors. One day the Emperor noticed these continual distractions, and stopped them by forbidding Mademoiselle Bourgoin to appear at the theatre unless it was on the stage.

This move on the part of His Majesty (a very wise one, as I take it) put the Emperor quite in the lady's black books. Another incident served to increase her vexation. The two Emperors used to go almost every evening to the playhouse together. The Czar thought Mademoiselle Bourgoin was charming, and did not disguise his admiration for her. This she knew, and used all her wiles to enslave him. One day the love-lorn monarch confided to Napoleon his passion for the fair one. "I don't advise you to make advances to her," said the Emperor.

"Do you think that she would refuse?"

"No, I don't; only to-morrow is post-day, and in five days all Paris will know how Your

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Majesty is made from head to heel. Then again, I am interested in your health . . . . so I hope that you may be able to resist the temptation."

These words served to cool the Czar's ardour with singular swiftness, and he thanked the Emperor for his timely counsel, adding:

"But from the tone of Your Majesty's speech I should be tempted to think that you bear this charming lady a grudge of some sort?"

"No, I don't, really," replied the Emperor; "I only know what they say."

This conversation took place in the bed-chamber, while His Majesty was dressing. The Czar went away completely convinced, and all Mademoiselle's oglings and hopes proved vain.

His Majesty entered Erfurt on the morning of the 27th of September, 1808. The King of Saxony, who arrived first, accompanied by Count Marcolini, Count de Haag and Count de Boze, awaited the Emperor at the foot of the Palace staircase. Then came the members of the Regency and of the Municipality, who offered their compliments in the traditional manner. After a brief halt, the Emperor took horse and rode out of Erfurt by the Weimar Gate, having paid a formal visit to the King of Saxony on the way. Outside the town he found

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the entire garrison drawn up in battle array. The grenadiers of the guard were commanded by M. d'Arquies, the 1st regiment of hussars by M. de Juniac, the 17th infantry by M. de Cabannes-Puymisson, and the 6th cuirassiers, the handsomest set of fellows imaginable, by Colonel d'Haugeranville. The Emperor reviewed the men, altered one or two positions, and then rode forward to meet the Czar.

The last-named left St. Petersburg on the 14th of September. On the 18th he reached Königsberg, where the King and Queen of Prussia awaited him. The Duke de Montebello had the honour of welcoming him at Bromberg by a salvo of twenty-one cannon. Alighting from his carriage, the Emperor Alexander took horse, and, accompanied by Marshal Soult, the Duke of Dalmatia, Marshal Lannes, and the Duke de Montebello, he galloped off to join the troops at Nansouty, who were drawn up in line of battle. Another salvo of twenty-one guns greeted his arrival, and there were repeated cries of "Long live the Czar!" As he rode past, inspecting the troops, he said to the officers, "I count it a great honour, gentlemen, to find myself among such brave, fine-looking soldiers."

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According to Marshal Soult's orders (who was only executing those of the Emperor), relays were in readiness all along the route by which the Czar was to travel. All receptions were interdicted. At each stopping-place there was an escort of dragoons or light cavalry, who paid His Majesty military honours as he passed along.

After dining with the officers of the Nansouty division the Czar re-entered his carriage, a *calèche* with two seats, and placed the Duke de Montebello beside him, who has told how kind and courteous the Czar was during the journey, even wrapping the Marshal's cloak comfortably round him when he was asleep.

His Imperial Majesty the Russian Emperor reached Weimar on the evening of the 26th, and continued his journey to Erfurt on the following day, escorted by Marshal Soult, his staff, and the senior officers of the Nansouty division, who had not quitted him since he reached Bromberg. It was about a league and a half from Erfurt that Alexander encountered Napoleon, who was riding out to meet him.

Directly the Czar perceived the Emperor he got out of the carriage and advanced towards him. Napoleon also dismounted. They embraced each

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other as affectionately as two old school-friends who had met after long absence; then they both rode past the regiments, who presented arms, and entered the town amid loud acclamations. On entering Erfurt the Czar wore the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, while the Emperor wore that of St. Andrew of Russia. The two Sovereigns continued to pay each other this mutual compliment during their stay. It was also noticed that the Emperor always placed the Czar on his right. On the evening of the Czar's arrival it was he who gave the password to the Grand Marshal; afterwards they took it in turns to do this.

They first went to the Czar's palace, where they stayed for an hour. Then Alexander paid a visit to Napoleon, who received him at the foot of the stairs, and accompanied him, when he withdrew, to the entrance of the corps-de-garde. At six o'clock the Czar dined with His Majesty, and continued to do so every day. At nine o'clock the Emperor went back with the Czar to his palace, where they had a private interview which lasted over an hour. That evening the whole town was illuminated.

The day after his arrival the Emperor on rising received the officers of the Czar's household, according them free passes available for the entire period of

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their stay. The Emperor Alexander did the same thing for the French officers.

The two Sovereigns seemed sincerely attached to each other, and on most intimate terms. The Czar came nearly every morning to the Emperor's bedroom and chatted familiarly with His Majesty. One day he examined the Emperor's commode, which was enamelled and cost six thousand francs. It had been done by Biennais. The Russian Emperor took a great fancy to it. As soon as he had gone Napoleon commanded me to fetch another commode of similar make which had just come from Paris, and take it across to the Czar's palace.

On another occasion when the Czar noticed the elegance and solidity of His Majesty's iron bedstead, next day, by Napoleon's orders and under my superintendence, a similar bedstead, with all its proper accessories, was placed in the Czar's sleeping apartment. The Russian Emperor was charmed with such an attention, and two days afterwards, to express his satisfaction, he instructed M. de Rémusat to present me, in his name, with two valuable diamond rings.

On one occasion the Czar adjusted his toilette in the Emperor's dressing-room, and I waited upon him. I supplied him with one of the Emperor's

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white cravats and a white *batiste* handkerchief. He was profuse in his thanks, being a Prince who was most gentle, amiable, and exquisitely polite.

There was an interchange of presents between the illustrious Sovereigns. The Czar gave the Emperor three superb sable pelisses. One of these Napoleon presented to his sister Pauline, and another to the Princess de Ponte Corvo. The third he had trimmed with green velvet and gold, and always used it when in Russia. The story of the one given to the Princess Pauline is sufficiently curious to merit transcription here, although it has already been narrated elsewhere.

Princess Pauline appeared highly delighted at the Emperor's present, and exhibited the pelisse to all the members of her household. One day, when showing it to an admiring circle of ladies, M. de Canouville came in, when she asked him what he thought of her beautiful present. The handsome Colonel did not seem as enchanted with it as she expected, at which she felt rather hurt.

"How now, sir? don't you think it perfectly charming?"

"Well, no, I don't, madam."

"You don't, really? Very well; as a punishment I wish you to keep the pelisse. I make you

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a present of it, and you must positively wear it. It is my wish—do you hear?"

Probably there had been a tiff of some sort between the Princess and her lover, and she had chosen the first chance of making it up. At any rate, M. de Canouville, after a little pressing, for form's sake accepted, and the handsome fur was sent to his home.

A few days afterwards, when the Emperor was reviewing the troops in the Place du Carrousel, M. de Canouville appeared, mounted on a restive horse, which he had some difficulty in keeping in check. The stir it made attracted the Emperor's attention, who at a glance recognised the pelisse given to Pauline, which had been transformed into a hussar's dolman. The Emperor could hardly restrain his anger.

"M. de Canouville," he cried, in a voice of thunder, "your horse is young and somewhat too full-blooded; you shall take it to Russia and break it in!"

Three days later the gallant Colonel left Paris.

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CHAPTER VI

The Czar's kindness to the French actors—King Jerome and the Grand Duke Constantine—The six demoiselles—The Erfurt plays: Cinna *and* Œdipus—*Nocturnal scare—Constant's alarm—Napoleon's nightmare—A hunting party—The Czar's first appearance as a sportsman—He opens the ball—Lunch on "Mount Napoleon"—Visit to the Jena battle-field—The Emperor's gift to the sufferers—Napoleon's lesson in strategy—Marshal Berthier remonstrates—The Emperor's answer—His erudition—Distribution by both monarchs of orders and presents—The Erfurt festivities terminate—The Czar's leave-taking.*

THE Emperor Alexander continually showed how pleased he was with the French actors by giving them presents and paying them compliments. As to the actresses, he would, as already shown, have gone to great lengths with one of them if the Emperor had not dissuaded him. The Grand Duke Constantine and Prince Murat, with other distinguished personages, were always giving parties to some of these fair ladies. Indeed, what quantities of furs and diamonds they took away with them from Erfurt! The two Emperors were not ignorant

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of such goings on; it highly amused them. It was the favourite topic of conversation in the morning, when the Emperor was getting up. It was to King Jerome that the Grand Duke Constantine was particularly attached. And so familiar was the former with the Grand Duke that he addressed him as "thou," and desired him to do the same. "Is it because I am a King," said he one day, "that you seem afraid to call me 'thou'? Come now, what does it matter between comrades?"

They used to play regular schoolboy pranks together, even roaming about the streets at night, ringing bells and knocking at doors, delighted if they succeeded in rousing some of the worthy townsfolk from their slumbers. When the Emperor was leaving Erfurt, Jerome said to the Grand Duke, "What would you like me to send you from Paris?"

"Why, nothing at all," replied the Grand Duke. "Your brother has given me a splendid sword; I am quite satisfied, and I don't want anything else."

"Yes; but I want to send you something, so tell me what you would really like!"

"Very well, then; send me half-a-dozen pretty girls from the Palais-Royal!"

The play at Erfurt was timed to begin at seven o'clock, but the two Emperors, who always

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came together, never arrived before half-past seven. The whole house rose at their entry, and the first piece at once began.

During the performance of *Cinna*, the Emperor thought that the Czar, seated in a box on the grand tier, could not hear very well, being slightly deaf. He accordingly gave instructions to M. de Rémusat to have a raised platform erected near the orchestra, on which *fauteuils* were placed for the Emperor and the Czar, seats being reserved on the right and left for the King of Saxony and the other Royalties. In this way Their Majesties occupied such a prominent position that it was impossible for them to make the slightest movement without being observed by the whole audience. On the 3rd of October, *Œdipus* was played, when all the Sovereigns were present. When one of the actors declaimed the line in the first act, "A great man's friendship is the gods' own gift," the Czar rose and gracefully proffered the Emperor his hand, amid tumultuous applause.

That same night I assisted the Emperor to undress as usual. All doors leading to his bed-room were carefully closed, and all the shutters firmly fastened. Thus no one could enter except through the ante-room in which I and Roustan slept. A sentry was stationed at the foot of the

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staircase. Every night I slept tranquilly, being sure that it was impossible to get to Napoleon without waking me. That night, about two a.m., a strange noise roused me from deep sleep. I sat up, rubbed my eyes, and listened attentively. Hearing nothing further, I thought I must have been dreaming, and I disposed myself for slumber, when suddenly I heard stifled moaning, low cries such as a man might utter if he were being strangled. Twice I heard these. I started up in bed, my very hair on end with fright, and cold sweat on my brow. I suddenly thought that the Emperor was being assassinated, and leaping out of bed I woke Roustan. The cries now grew louder, so I straightway opened the door and entered the Emperor's bed-chamber, glancing hastily round to make sure that no one was in the room. On approaching the bed, I saw the Emperor lying crosswise in a convulsed posture, all the bed clothes being flung off and all his limbs in a state of nervous cramp. His half-opened mouth gave forth incoherent cries; his chest seemed greatly oppressed, and one of his hands was pressed tight to the pit of his stomach. I was quite frightened to look at him. I called him, but he did not answer; I called him again and again, yet

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he was still silent. At last I shook him gently. Thereupon the Emperor jumped up with a loud scream, saying, "What is it? what is it?" and looking wildly about with wide-opened eyes. I hastened to inform him that seeing he was tortured by a hideous nightmare, I had ventured to wake him. "You did quite right, my dear Constant," said His Majesty. "Oh, my friend, what a dreadful dream I had! A bear seemed to be tearing out my vitals!" Then the Emperor rose, and while I was setting his bed in order, he walked up and down the room. He was obliged to change his night-shirt, the one that he was wearing being soaked with sweat. After some time he lay down again.

Next morning, when dressing, he told with what difficulty he had been able to get to sleep again, so dreadful had been the effect of this nightmare. The thought of his hideous dream often haunted him, and he often alluded to it, each time trying to draw from it different conclusions. As for me, I was struck by the coincidence of the Czar's compliment at the play and this appalling nightmare, the more so because the Emperor was never subject to such nightly troubles.

On the 6th of October Their Majesties attended

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a shooting party arranged in the Ettersburg forest by the Grand Duke of Weimar. The Emperor left Erfurt at noon accompanied by the Czar. They reached the forest in an hour's time, and found a tent had been specially prepared for their reception, which was elaborately decorated. It was divided into three compartments, the centre one being a charming *salon*, which had been richly furnished for the use of the two Emperors. Bands stationed round the tent played lively strains, while there was loud applause from a vast crowd of spectators all eager to see the Emperor.

Their Majesties on alighting were received by the Grand Duke of Weimar and his son, the hereditary Prince Charles Frederick. The King of Bavaria, the King of Saxony, the King of Wurtemberg, Prince William of Prussia, the Princes of Mecklenburg, the Prince Primate and the Duke d'Oldenburg, awaited at the entrance to the *salon*.

The Emperor's suite included the Prince of Neufchâtel, the Prince of Benevento, the Duke de Friuli, the Duke of Vicenza, the Duke of Rovigo, General Lauriston, His Majesty's aide-de-camp, General Nansouty, Eugène de Montesquieu, Comte de Beausset and M. Cavaletti.

The Emperor of Russia had with him the

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Grand Duke Constantine, Count Tolstoï, Grand Marshal, and Count Oggeroski, aide-de-camp to His Majesty.

The shooting party lasted about two hours, in which time about sixty stags and roebucks were killed. The space in which the poor brutes were confined was shut in with canvas, so that the monarchs could shoot at them as they liked while seated comfortably in the tent. I never in my life saw anything more absurd than battues of this sort, at which, however, some sportsmen acquire the reputation of crack shots. Great skill, indeed, is needed to hit a poor brute that the beaters, so to speak, take by the ears and thrust in front of the barrel of your gun!

The Emperor of Russia was very short-sighted, so that he had not much liking for sport of this kind. However, on that day he seemed wishful to take part in the performance, so the Duke de Montebello at once supplied him with a gun. M. de Beauterne had the honour of giving the Emperor his first lesson. A stag was driven about eight feet in front of the Czar, who brought it down at the first shot.

After the sport was over, Their Majesties went to the palace of Weimar, where the reigning Duchess,

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with her entire Court, received them as they alighted. The Emperor cordially saluted the Duchess, remembering how he saw her two years ago under vastly different circumstances. The Duke of Weimar had asked the Grand Marshal to let him employ French cooks to prepare His Majesty's dinner, but the Emperor preferred to try German fare. The Imperial dinner party included the Duke and Duchess of Weimar, the Queen of Westphalia, the King of Wurtemberg, the King of Saxony, the Grand Duke Constantine, Prince William of Prussia, the Prince Primate, the Prince of Neufchâtel, Prince de Talleyrand, the Duke of Oldenburg, the hereditary Prince of Weimar, and the Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

Dinner was followed by a *gala* performance at the Weimar theatre, where the *Death of Cæsar* was given, and a ball at the ducal palace. The Czar opened this with the Queen of Westphalia, amid general astonishment, for it was well known that this monarch had never danced since his accession to the throne. Such abstention on his part earned much praise from veteran Russian courtiers, who deemed a Sovereign too highly placed for him to indulge in the amusements of ordinary mortals. At the Duke of Weimar's ball, however, there was nothing that could have shocked them, for they

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did not dance, but merely promenaded, two and two, while the band played a march.

Next morning Their Majesties drove to "Mount Napoleon," near Jena. A splendid lunch awaited them, which had been set out in a specially-constructed tent, erected on the very spot where the Emperor had bivouacked at the battle of Jena. After lunch Their Majesties climbed up "Mount Napoleon," where a large tent had been erected; it was decorated with plans of the battle. A deputation from the town and the University of Jena here waited upon His Majesty, who conversed in detail with its members as to the characteristics and resources of their town and its inmates. He asked the approximate cost of the damage done to the inhabitants by the erection of the military hospital, which had been set up for such a long while in their midst. He desired to know the names of those who had been the chief sufferers by the war and by incendiarism, and ordered that pecuniary indemnification should be awarded to these persons. His Majesty enquired with much interest as to the state of the Catholic religion there, and promised to perpetually endow the presbytery. He made an advance of three thousand francs, and promised a further payment.

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After riding round to inspect the plain of Apolda and the positions occupied by the two armies on the eve of the great battle, the two Emperors returned to Erfurt, where they arrived at five o'clock in the evening, almost simultaneously with the hereditary Grand Duke of Baden and the Princess Stephanie.

All the while they were on the battlefield the Emperor took great pleasure in explaining everything to the young Czar, who listened most attentively. His Majesty seemed to enjoy explaining the line of tactics which he pursued and his ideas upon the art of warfare. Thus, for more than an hour, the Emperor monopolised the conversation, and his kingly hearers listened intently, like schoolboys eager to profit by the lessons of their master.

When His Majesty got back to his apartment, I heard Marshal Berthier say to him, "Sire, are you not afraid that the Sovereigns may one day profit by all that you have just taught them? Your Majesty would seem to have forgotten just now what you have sometimes told us, that we should treat our allies as if, later on, they would become our enemies."

"Berthier," rejoined the Emperor, smiling, "that's a bold remark for you to make, and I thank you for it. God forgive me; but I think you must

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all have thought me a fool. So you think, do you," continued His Majesty, as he pulled one of the Marshal's ears hard, "that it was silly of me to put rods into their hands with which they may whip us later? Don't be alarmed, I did not tell them everything."

The Emperor's table at Erfurt was oblong in shape. Their Majesties sat at one end, the allied Sovereigns being placed on either side of them, and the opposite corner was always empty. Here the Prefect of the Palace, M. de Beausset, stood, and, in his memoirs, he gives an account of the following conversation:

"On that day, the 7th of October, the talk turned upon the subject of the Golden Bull, which, until the establishment of the Rhenish Confederation, had served as a code for the election of emperors, and had determined the number and rank of electors, etc. The Prince Primate mentioned certain details respecting this Bull, which, he said, had been framed in 1409. The Emperor pointed out that this date was inexact, as the Bull was proclaimed in 1336, during the reign of the Emperor Charles IV. 'That is true, Sire,' replied the Prince Primate. 'I was wrong; but how is it that Your Majesty knows all this so correctly?'

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"'When I was merely a second lieutenant of artillery——' said Napoleon. At this phrase there was a general stir among his august listeners. 'When I had the honour of being merely a second lieutenant of artillery, I was for three years stationed in the garrison at Valentia. I cared little for society, but lived in great seclusion. Luckily, I lived near a learned and most obliging bookseller. I read and re-read all the books on his shelves during those three years of garrison life, and I forgot nothing, not even those things which had nothing to do with my calling. Nature, indeed, had given me a good memory for figures. It often happens that I can quote to my ministers the several items in detail and the sum total of their long-forgotten accounts.'"

A few days before leaving Erfurt, the Emperor gave the Cross of the Legion of Honour to M. de Bigi, the commander of the garrison, to M. Vogel, burgomaster of Jena, and to MM. Wieland and Goethe, and to M. Stark, surgeon-major at Jena. Upon General Count Tolstoï, the Russian Ambassador, he bestowed the Grand Order of the Legion of Honour, and to M. Meimung, the dean who had twice celebrated Mass at the Palace, he gave a diamond ring with the letter "N" surmounted by a crown, as well as a hundred

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napoleons to the two priests who assisted His Reverence. To Count Tolstoï he gave some fine Gobelin and Savonne tapestry, and the Sèvres porcelain which had been brought specially from Paris to decorate the Erfurt Palace. The ministers, grand dignitaries, and officials attached to the Czar's suite were awarded splendid presents. The Emperor Alexander did as much for the members of Napoleon's suite. He bestowed the Grand Cordon of St. Andrew upon the Duke of Vicenza, and the diamond plaque of the same Order upon the Princes of Benevento and Neufchâtel.

Delighted with the talent of the French actors, notably with that of Talma, the Emperor Alexander gave all of them handsome presents. He sent his compliments to all the ladies of the company, and did not forget to include its director, Dazincourt, in his generosity.

On the 14th of October this sumptuous and brilliant meeting at Erfurt came to a close, and all the illustrious personages who had taken part in it left the town on or before that date.

On the day of his departure the Emperor received in audience Baron de Vincent, the Austrian envoy-extraordinary, and entrusted him with a letter for his Sovereign. At eleven o'clock the Czar

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paid the Emperor a visit, and soon afterwards His Majesty returned it, being accompanied by his whole Court. After a mutual interchange of compliments the two Sovereigns got into a carriage, and only separated at their former meeting-place on the high road to Weimar. Here they embraced and affectionately bade each other adieu. The Emperor reached Saint-Cloud at half-past nine on the evening of the 18th of October, travelling *incognito* the whole way.

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CHAPTER VII

Return to Saint-Cloud—Departure for Bayonne—The Empress's terror—Farewells—The mysterious talisman—Forebodings—Arrival at Vittoria—Capture of Burgos—Bivouac of the Old Guard—Marching to Madrid—Crossing the Soma-Sierra—Arrival at Madrid—The Emperor takes Madrid—Spanish respect for Royalty—The Marquis de Saint-Simon condemned to death—The Emperor pardons him—A pretty actress's adventures—Napoleon's horror of perfumes—A sudden headache—The fair one is dismissed—Privations of the soldiery—The abbess of Tordesillas—Arrival at Valladolid—Murders by the Dominicans—Hubert, the Emperor's valet, is attacked—The monks arraigned before the Emperor—His anger—Duroc scolds Constant—The latter appeals to the Emperor—His Majesty's justice—Constant falls ill—Return to Paris—Talleyrand in disgrace.

His Majesty only stayed ten days at Saint-Cloud, two or three of which he spent in Paris at the opening of the session of the legislative body. On the 29th, at noon, he started once more for Bayonne.

The Empress, who, to her great regret, could not accompany him, sent for me on the morning of our departure, and in touching accents besought

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me to take great care of my master. She always did this whenever he was about to travel. She feared the Spanish character, and felt anxious lest her husband should be assassinated.

Their leave-taking was a painfully sad one. The Empress wanted to come, and the Emperor had the greatest difficulty in calming her and in making her see that it was impossible for her to accompany him. At the moment of starting, His Majesty went back into his dressing-room and told me to unbutton his coat and vest. I did so, and saw the Emperor put a black ribbon round his neck, under his waistcoat. A little sachet was attached to this ribbon about the size of a walnut, covered with black silk. I do not know what it contained, but His Majesty always wore it about his person in all his campaigns. When he came back to Paris, he gave it to me to keep. The sachet had a delightful perfume; under the silk covering there was another of leather. Later on I shall have a mournful opportunity of stating the reason why the Emperor always wore this sachet.

Heavy-hearted I set out. The Empress's entreaties, the fears which I could not disregard, and the fatigues of these continual journeys, all helped to make me despondent. Indeed, despondency was

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written on the faces of all the members of the suite. The officers said that wars in the north were mere child's play to what they were now going to face in Spain.

We reached the Château of Marrac on the 3rd of November. Four days afterwards we were at Vittoria in the midst of the French army. Here the Emperor met his brother and some of the Spanish grandees who had not yet deserted his cause.

Upon the troops the Emperor's arrival had an electric effect, and their enthusiasm in some slight degree served to encourage the disheartened King. A start was almost immediately made for Burgos, which was stormed and sacked in a few hours, as the inhabitants had fled, leaving the garrison to do what it could to check the advance of the French. The Emperor was quartered in the archbishop's palace, a splendid building overlooking a vast square, where the grenadiers of the Imperial guard bivouacked. This bivouac was a strange sight. Huge cauldrons that had been found in the convents were suspended above fires made of pieces of furniture, guitars, mandolines. They were filled with mutton, game and rabbits, while, pipe in mouth, the grenadiers sat gravely round about in

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gorgeous armchairs of crimson damask and gilt wood, carefully superintending the cooking, and exchanging ideas as to the forthcoming campaign.

The Emperor stopped ten or twelve days at Burgos, and then orders were given to march upon Madrid. The route through Valladolid would have been a safer and a pleasanter one, but the Emperor wished to capture the Col de Somo-Sierra, an important position fortified by Nature, and which had always been looked upon as impregnable. This position, situate between two steep mountains, defended the capital. It was held by twelve thousand rebels and twelve guns, which, placed as they were, could do more damage than thirty or forty elsewhere. In truth, there was much to check the progress of the most redoubtable army—yet who might ever succeed in blocking the Emperor's path?

On the evening of the 29th of November we reached the village of Basaguillas, which was three leagues distant from this formidable defile. It was intensely cold, yet the Emperor did not go to bed, but spent the night writing in his tent, wrapped in the pelisse given to him by the Czar. About three o'clock in the morning he came to warm himself at the camp fire where I was sitting, as I could not bear the cold and damp of the cellar which had

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been allotted to me as my lodging, with a few handfuls of filthy straw for my bed. At eight o'clock the position was attacked and carried, and next day we had Madrid in front of us. The Emperor's head-quarters were at the Château de Champ-Martin, a little way out of the town. It belonged to the Duke de l'Infantado's mother. Round this house the army was encamped. With tears in her eyes its owner came to implore the Emperor to cancel the fatal decree which made her son an outlaw, and His Majesty did his best to console her, though he could promise nothing, such a measure having been generally enforced.

The town was not taken without some difficulty. In the first place, because the Emperor had ordered that in attacking the greatest moderation should be observed, as "he did not wish to restore to his brother a city that had been burned down;" and, in the second place, because the Grand Duke of Berg when staying at Madrid had fortified the Retiro Palace, which the Spanish insurgents were courageously defending. The town had no other means of defence, there being only a wall round it, much like that encircling Paris.

In three days' time it was captured, but the Emperor would not enter it. He still continued to

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reside at Champ-Martin. On one occasion, however, he came disguised and in strict *incognito* to visit the Royal Palace and the principal districts.

It is singular that the Spanish people have ever shown profound respect for everything appertaining to a King, whether they regard him as their lawful Sovereign or not. When King Joseph left Madrid the Palace was closed, and the Government took up its quarters in a fine building which had formerly been the post-office. From that time forward no one entered the Palace except the servants, who from time to time swept the rooms and kept these in order. Not a chair, not a book was moved from its place. David's masterpiece, representing Napoleon on Mont Saint-Bernard, still hung in the grand reception-room, and the Queen's portrait opposite, exactly as the King had originally placed them. The cellars, too, were left absolutely intact, as well as the apartments of King Charles; not one of all his huge collection of watches had been touched.

An act of clemency on the part of His Majesty towards the Marquis de Saint-Simon, signalised in touching fashion the entry of the French troops into Madrid. The Marquis, a French emigrant, had since his emigration entered the Spanish service. Part of

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the capital was under his command, and the position he defended was exactly opposite that of the Emperor when at the gates of Madrid. Long after other commanders had surrendered he offered resistance. Annoyed at still hearing shots from that quarter, the Emperor ordered a vigorous charge to be made, as a result of which the Marquis was taken prisoner. In his ill-humour the Emperor had him tried by court-martial, and he was sentenced to be shot. The sentence was about to be executed when Mdlle. de Saint-Simon—a charming young lady—flung herself at the Emperor's feet, when he at once consented to pardon her father.

The King immediately re-entered the capital, and with him the leading families of Madrid, who had been forced to withdraw from the centre of revolt. Ere long balls and festivals were given; the theatres re-opened, and there was general rejoicing. There was a charmingly pretty actress at the Grand Theatre, a girl of about sixteen, with coal-black hair, gleaming eyes, and a delightful air of virginal freshness. She had been able—so they said, at least—to preserve her virtue untouched through all the perils to which, as an actress, she was exposed. She was of noble disposition, light-hearted, merry; in fact, she had all the graces of her sex: she was adorable.

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Anyhow, this is what Monsieur de B. told His Majesty. He had been to the theatre on the previous night, and had come away utterly spell-bound. Monsieur de B. also said that the poor child was an orphan who lived with an old aunt. This aunt was as avaricious as she was depraved; pretending to be very fond of her niece, and extolling the beauty and charming qualities of her "darling girl," in the hope of making a fortune through the liberality of some rich and powerful "guardian."

On hearing such a flattering account the Emperor expressed a wish to see the fair damsel. Monsieur de B. hurried off to the aunt; an arrangement was speedily made, and that evening her niece came to Champ-Martin, dressed up in dazzling style and reeking of all imaginable scents. I have already stated that the Emperor had a strong dislike to scents, and he did not omit to show such dislike when I introduced the poor girl into his apartment. By thus drenching herself with essences, no doubt she thought to give him great pleasure. However, she was so pretty, so bewitching in appearance, that on looking at her the Emperor's hatred of scent vanished.

I had left the bedroom about two hours when I heard a violent ring at the bell, and hurrying in

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only found the young lady. The Emperor was in his dressing-room, his head propped on his hands. "Constant," he cried on seeing me, "take away the little girl, for goodness' sake! She'll be the death of me with her scents; they are perfectly intolerable. Open all the windows and the doors too. But, above all, get rid of her, and be quick about it!"

It was very late to have to send away a woman like that, yet there was nothing for it but to obey; so I proceeded to acquaint the poor little girl with His Majesty's wish. At first she did not understand, and I had to repeat the sentence several times, "Mademoiselle, His Majesty wishes you to withdraw." Then she began to cry; imploring me not to let her go out at such an hour; and it was in vain for me to assure her that all requisite precautions would be taken, and that she should have a comfortable and closely-shut carriage. Her prayers and tears did not cease, and she refused to be comforted until I showed her the handsome present that the Emperor had commissioned me to give her.

On going back to His Majesty I found him still in his dressing-room, bathing his temples with eau-de-cologne. Leaning upon me he then went to bed.

Leaving Champ-Martin on the 22nd of December, the Emperor moved in the direction of Astorga,

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meaning to get ahead of the English, who had just landed at Coruña. But despatches which reached him by the Paris courier at Astorga made him determine to resume his route for France. Accordingly he gave orders to march on Valladolid. From Benevente to Astorga the road was strewn in a horrible way with corpses of men and horses, with shattered gun-carriages and transport-waggons. Everywhere we encountered detachments of soldiers with tattered uniforms and devoid of boots and of arms. Their condition in short was most deplorable. They were all fleeing to Astorga, which they looked upon as a haven of refuge, and which soon was unable to hold them all. The weather was fearfully bad, with blinding snow. I had ill-health myself, and suffered much during this painful march.

At Tordesillas the Emperor took up his head-quarters in the outer buildings of the Sainte-Claire convent. The abbess was presented to His Majesty. She was over seventy-five, and since the age of ten had never left the convent. Her gentle, intelligent conversation greatly pleased the Emperor. He asked what he could do for her, and left her solid proofs of his goodwill.

We reached Valladolid on the 6th of January, 1809. Things there were still in a ferment. Two

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or three days after our arrival a cavalry officer was assassinated by certain Dominican friars. Hubert, one of our comrades, when passing along a lonely street at nightfall, was attacked by three fellows and seriously wounded. They would doubtless have killed him if some of the grenadiers of the guard, hearing his cries, had not hastened to his rescue. In this case, too, the aggressors were monks. The Emperor, incensed, caused the Dominican convent to be searched, and the officer's body was found at the bottom of a well, when the convent was forthwith demolished by order of His Majesty. Indeed, he at first thought of doing away with all the convents in the town. On second thoughts, however, he contented himself with giving an audience, at which all the monks of Valladolid had to appear before him. On the day appointed they came, not all, but deputations from each convent, and flung themselves at the Emperor's feet, who loaded them with reproaches. He styled them murderers and brigands, and told them that they all deserved to be hanged. Humbly, and in silence, the wretched priests listened to this terrible language, but at last the Emperor grew calmer, and quitting the circle of officers round him, he advanced towards the grovelling monks and bade them rise, which they

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did. They kissed the hem of his coat, and crowded round him in such an eager way that no little alarm was felt by the members of his suite, for had there been a Dominican among the crowd it was only too probable that he would have made an attempt upon His Majesty's life.

While the Emperor was at Valladolid, I had an altercation with the Grand Marshal that I shall remember all my life, and in which the Emperor interfered, showing much justice and kindness towards myself. The facts are the following:

One morning Grand Marshal Duroc, Duke of Friuli, meeting me in His Majesty's apartment, asked me in a rough way (for he was in a dreadfully bad temper) if I had got everything ready for the calèche. I respectfully replied that "everything was always ready." Three times the Duke asked me this question, each time raising his voice to a louder pitch, and each time I respectfully made the same reply. "D—n it all!" cried he at last, "you don't seem to understand me, eh?"

"That is because Your Excellency does not explain matters clearly."

Then he told me about a new carriage which had only arrived from Paris that very day, and

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of which as yet I had heard absolutely nothing. I was about to answer His Excellency, who, however, would not listen to me, but went off shouting and swearing, while abusing me in a manner to which I was wholly unaccustomed. I followed him as far as his apartments in order to have the matter explained, but on reaching his door he went in and banged it in my face. However, a moment or two afterwards I went in, but the Duke had forbidden his valet to admit me, saying that he had nothing to tell me, nor anything to hear from me. This message was couched in the most harsh and insulting terms.

Being little used to such exhibitions of temper, I went straight to the Emperor. So agitated was I that the tears rolled down my cheeks. His Majesty wished to know what had happened, and I told him how the Grand Marshal had been storming at me.

"You're just like a child," said the Emperor; "calm yourself, do; and tell the Grand Marshal that I wish to speak to him."

His Excellency was not slow in obeying the Emperor's call; it was I who showed him in. "Look, Marshal," said the Emperor, pointing to me, "look into what a state you've thrown that

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poor fellow! What has he done to be treated thus?" The Grand Marshal bowed without answering, and looked vastly annoyed. The Emperor, continuing, observed that he ought to have given his orders more clearly, and that there was some excuse for not executing an order if it was unintelligibly given. Then, turning to me, the Emperor said, "M. Constant, rest assured that this shall not occur again."

This simple fact excellently serves to confute the many false statements as to the Emperor's character. Of course there was an immense distance between the Grand Marshal of the Palace and a mere valet, nevertheless the former was reproved for wrongfully scolding the latter. In administering household justice the Emperor showed strict impartiality; never were matters relating to the interior of the Palace better managed, because in his own home it was really he, and he alone, who was master.

The Grand Marshal bore me a grudge for some time afterwards, but as I have already said, he was an excellent man, and his ill-humour so completely disappeared that in Paris, on our return, he told me to represent him at the christening of my father-in-law's child, the god-mother being the

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Empress Josephine, who was kind enough to choose my wife as her representative. The Duke of Friuli did everything with as much nobility and grandeur as grace. I am glad to do justice to his memory by affirming that he profited by every occasion to be of service to me, and so make me forget the pain which his ill-temper once caused me.

At Valladolid I had a violent attack of fever, being taken ill a few days before the Emperor left. He started without me, but I made haste to follow him, despite my illness; and no sooner had I left Valladolid than I began to recover. I reached Paris a few days after the Emperor, just as His Majesty had appointed Comte de Montesquieu Grand Chamberlain in place of Prince de Talleyrand, whom I met that very day, yet who seemed not the least affected by this disgrace. Possibly the dignity of Vice-Grand Elector conferred upon him in exchange may have served to console him.

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CHAPTER VIII

Arrival in Paris—The palace at Madrid and the Louvre—The Château de Chambord—The Emperor hard at work—The Emperor as a musician—His want of ear—He hums the Marseillaise—Crescentini and Madame Grassini—Crescentini as an artist—Death of Dazincourt—Ingratitude of the public—The Emperor at the Elysée—Marriage of the Duke of Castiglione—The Grand Duchess of Tuscany—Sport at Rambouillet—Talma recites—Their Majesties start for Strasburg—The Emperor crosses the Rhine—Battle of Ratisbon—The Emperor wounded—Alarm of the army—The Emperor's courage—The staff are requested not to speak of the affair—A Bavarian family saved by Constant—M. Pfister insane—The Emperor's concern—A million in diamonds—Plot against the Emperor—His moderation—Letter from the Prince de Neufchâtel to Archduke Maximilian—Bombardment of Vienna—Marie Louise's life saved by the Emperor—Flight of Maximilian—Capture of Vienna—Amazement of the Austrians.

THE Emperor arrived in Paris on the 23rd of January, and, with the exception of a few days of travel, he spent the remainder of the winter at Rambouillet and Saint-Cloud.

On the same day that he arrived in Paris, though he must have been very tired by a journey

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straight from Valladolid, the Emperor visited the building then in course of erection at the Louvre and the Rue de Rivoli. He was full of all that he had seen at the Madrid Palace, and fresh suggestions of his to M. Fontaine and other architects proved how desirous he was of making the Louvre the finest palace in the world. Then His Majesty had a report made of the Château de Chambord, which he wished to give to the Prince of Neufchâtel. M. Fontaine found that the repairs needed to make the place habitable would cost 1,700,000 francs. The building was in a deplorable state; it had hardly ever been touched since the death of the Marshal de Saxe.

His Majesty spent these two months and a half transacting cabinet affairs, which he rarely, and always regretfully, relinquished. His amusements were, as usual, plays and concerts. He was passionately fond of music, especially of Italian music; and like all great amateurs he was very hard to please. He would like to have sung himself if he could, but he had no ear whatever, yet this did not prevent him from occasionally humming snatches of melodies which had impressed him. It was usually in the morning that these reminiscences came to him, and he treated me to such tunes while he was being

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dressed. The air that I most frequently heard him murder was the "Marseillaise." The Emperor used also to whistle at times, though not loudly. The air of "Malbrook" if whistled by His Majesty was for me a sure sign that the army would soon leave for the front. I remember that he never whistled so much, nor seemed so gay, as at the moment of starting on the Russian campaign.

The Emperor's favourite singers were Crescentini and Madame Grassini. I saw Crescentini make his *début* in Paris as Romeo in *Roméo et Juliette*. He came preceded by an immense reputation as the first singer of Italy. This fame he completely justified, in spite of all the obstacles which he had to overcome, for I can well recollect the many hard things that were said of him before he appeared. According to certain wiseacres he was a bellower, devoid of taste or refinement, having no method, an executant of silly roulades, a cold, unintelligent actor, &c. When going upon the stage he was aware how ill-inclined were his judges to show him any signs of favour. Yet he was not in the least embarrassed, but his majestic bearing came as an agreeable surprise to those who expected to see an ungainly boor. A murmur of approval greeted him, with such electrical effect upon himself that in the

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very first act the whole house was with him. Gestures full of grace and dignity, absolute mastery of the art of acting, a mobile face, expressing with amazing truth all the varying shades of passion and despair—all these rare and precious equipments did but deepen the magic of this great artist's entrancing voice, the charm of which was inconceivable, at any rate for such as had never yet heard him. With each exciting scene the audience grew more and more enthusiastic. In the third act, however, the delight of the audience became positively frantic. It was in this act, played almost entirely by Crescentini, that this admirable singer touched the souls of his hearers by his movingly pathetic presentment of love and despair, as expressed in delicious melody. The Emperor was charmed, and caused a handsome fee to be paid to Crescentini, while expressing in most flattering terms the great pleasure it had been to hear him.

On that evening—as indeed whenever they subsequently acted together — Crescentini was most admirably supported by Madame Grassini, an artiste of high talent, who possessed the most wonderful voice which had ever been heard till then in a theatre. She and Madame Barilli were rivals for public favour.

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That same evening, or the day after, when Crescentini made his *début*, the French stage sustained an irreparable loss by the death of Dazincourt, at the early age of sixty. The malady which proved fatal first attacked him upon his return from Erfurt. It was long and painful; yet the public, for whose entertainment this great comedian had so long striven, showed no concern for him until his disease was past curing and he lay at the point of death. Formerly when illness kept a favourite actor away from the boards—and who, if not Dazincourt, deserved such a title?—the pit used to express its regret at his absence by making daily enquiries as to his health. At the close of every performance the actor instructed to inform the public of the next day's play used also to read out the latest bulletin of his comrade's health. With poor Dazincourt, however, this was not the case, and the pit proved ungrateful towards him.

I had sincere regard and esteem for Dazincourt, whose acquaintance I made some years before his decease. Few were more deserving than he of esteem and affection. Of his talent I will not speak; talent which made him a worthy successor of Préville, whose pupil and friend he was. All his contemporaries must remember how Dazincourt

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played Figaro; yet I am here concerned to speak of the actor's noble character, his generosity, and his stainless honesty. Birth and education would at first have seemed to keep him far from the stage. Circumstances alone placed him there, yet he knew how to avoid the temptations that surrounded him. Amid all the questionable society of the green-room and the wings he still remained the well-bred gentleman of unstained morals. He was received by the very best society, whom he delighted by his wit no less than by his urbanity and good manners; and when he thus amused everybody, no one ever seemed to remember that he was a comedian.

At the close of February His Majesty went to stay for a time at the Elysée Palace. It is there, if I am right, that the marriage contract of one of his best lieutenants, Marshal Augereau, was signed. He had lately been made Duke of Castiglione, and his bride was Mademoiselle Bourlon de Chavanges. Here also the Imperial decree was issued, granting the Grand Duchy of Tuscany with the title of Grand Duchess to the Princess Elizabeth.

Towards the middle of March the Emperor spent a few days at Rambouillet. There were some

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fine shooting parties, at one of which the Emperor himself shot a stag near the St. Hubert lake. There was also a concert, followed by a ball. Crescentini, Madame Grassini, Madame Barilli, and other celebrities sang, and Talma afterwards gave a recitation.

On the 13th of April, at four a.m., on receiving news of a fresh invasion of Bavaria by the Austrians, the Emperor set out for Strasburg accompanied by the Empress, whom he left in this town. On the 15th, at eleven o'clock a.m., he crossed the Rhine at the head of his army. The Empress did not remain long alone; the Queen of Westphalia, the Queen of Holland and her sons, the Grand Duchess of Baden and her husband, all hastened to join her.

The grand campaign of 1809 immediately commenced. We all know what a glorious one it was, one of the minor events in it being the capture of Vienna. At the taking of Ratisbon, on the 23rd of April, the Emperor was wounded by a spent bullet in the right foot, which caused a severe contusion. I was with the other servants when several grenadiers of the guard came running to tell me that the Emperor had been wounded. I hurried off, and got there just as M. Yvan was

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bandaging the Emperor's foot. His Majesty had his boot cut open and then laced up again. Then he at once got into the saddle. Several generals begged him to rest, but he replied, "My friends, I have to see everything, haven't I?" Inexpressible was the enthusiasm of the men, on hearing that their chief had been wounded, though not seriously. "The Emperor is exposed just the same as we are," they cried; "there's nothing of the coward about him!"

The journals made no mention of this incident. Before an engagement the Emperor always urged his staff, in case he should be wounded, to conceal the fact from his troops. "Who knows," said he, "what horrible confusion might not result from the news? On my life hangs the fate of a great Empire. So recollect, gentlemen, if I am wounded, nobody is to know this, if possible. If I am killed, you must try and win the battle without me. It will be time to publish the news afterwards."

Fifteen days after the taking of Ratisbon, I was travelling on ahead, accompanied only by one of the officials of the Imperial household, when suddenly we heard awful shrieks which came from a house on the borders of the highway. I at once

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stopped the horses, and we got out. On entering the house we saw several soldiers, loafers such as there are in every army, and who, unmindful of France's alliance with Bavaria, were treating the inmates (Bavarian) in a most shocking way. The family consisted of an old grandmother, a young woman, and three little children. Our embroidered uniforms luckily had an effect upon these ne'er-do-weels. We threatened them with the Emperor's anger, and succeeded in making them leave the house. We soon afterwards took our departure also, the good folk being lavish in their thanks. That evening I told the Emperor what we had done, and he highly commended me, saying:

"It's no use; every army has its cowards and blackguards, and it is they who do all the harm. A really brave, honest soldier would blush at such things as these."

At the commencement of these Memoirs I had occasion to mention a M. Pfister, one of His Majesty's most faithful servants, and one of those also to whom the Emperor was particularly attached. M. Pfister had been with him in Egypt, and had been repeatedly exposed to various perils for his sake. On the day of the battle of Landshut, which was either before or immediately after the taking of Ratisbon, the poor

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fellow went mad. Rushing out of his tent he tried to hide himself in a wood near the battlefield, where he stripped himself stark naked. After some time the Emperor asked for M. Pfister. Every attempt to find him was promptly made, but without success. Fearing that he had been taken prisoner by the Austrians, the Emperor sent an orderly to the Austrians asking them to surrender M. Pfister, and proposing to let them have another prisoner in exchange. The orderly came back to say that the Austrians had not seen M. Pfister. Greatly distressed, the Emperor ordered active search to be made in the neighbourhood, and it was then that the poor sufferer was found quite naked under a tree, in a fearful state, his body bleeding and torn by brambles. He was at once brought into camp, seemingly quite tranquil; in fact, they thought he was cured, but soon after his return from Paris he had another attack. The form of his mania was of a most indecent nature. He appeared before the Empress Josephine with his dress disarranged, and made such disgusting gestures that it became necessary to prevent his seeing her. He was placed under the care of Dr. Esquirol, who, in spite of all his talent, could not cure him. I often went to see him. Though the attacks had ceased his brain was affected. He could hear and

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understand quite well; his answers alone were those of a perfect lunatic. For the Emperor his devotion remained the same, and he always spoke of His Majesty, believing himself to be still in his service. One day he mysteriously offered to acquaint me with a terrible secret. There was a plot, said he, against the Emperor's life. At the same time he gave me a petition for His Majesty, with twenty scraps of paper on which he had scribbled himself. These constituted the evidence of the conspiracy, so he assured me. On another occasion he gave me—always for the Emperor—a handful of pebbles, which he said were diamonds of great price. "Those that I have given you are worth more than a million," said he. I always gave an account of my interviews with Pfister to the Emperor, who was deeply touched to hear that the poor fellow always thought of his Royal master, who was ever foremost in his disordered mind. He died without recovering his reason.

On May 10th, at nine o'clock a.m., the first lines of defence of the Austrian capital were attacked and broken by Marshal Oudinot. The suburbs soon afterwards surrendered. Then the Duke de Montebello charged at the head of his division, but the garrison, closing its doors, replied by a terrific volley, which fortunately only killed a very few. The Duke then

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called upon the garrison to surrender the city, to which Archduke Maximilian replied by declaring that he would defend Vienna as long as there was breath left in his body. This reply was transmitted to the Emperor.

After holding a council with his generals, His Majesty commissioned Colonel Lagrange to make fresh proposals for capitulation to the Archduke, and the unfortunate Colonel had hardly entered the city than he was knocked down by the infuriated populace. General O'Reilly managed to save his life by having him seized and carried off by his soldiers. This dastardly act, which to many of the Viennese themselves proved revolting, did not alter His Majesty's generous intention. He desired to show himself as moderate and as full of consideration as possible. Accordingly he wrote, through the Prince of Neufchâtel, the following letter, which, by chance, has fallen into my hands.

"The Prince of Neufchâtel to His Highness Archduke Maximilian, Commandant of the City of Vienna.

"His Majesty the Emperor and King desires to spare this great and interesting population all the calamities by which it is menaced, and he instructs me to point out to Your Highness that if you con-

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tinue to offer resistance it will cause the destruction of one of the finest cities in Europe. Wherever war may have led him, my Sovereign has ever been solicitous to spare the non-armed population all the disasters which it brings with it. Your Highness must be convinced that His Majesty is deeply affected to see on the very verge of ruin that city which once it was his glory to save. However, contrary to the custom observed in fortresses, Your Highness caused guns to be fired in the direction of the town, and this firing might kill not an enemy, but the wife or child of one of your most zealous servants. If Your Highness persists in defending the city His Majesty will be obliged to commence bombarding it, and the ruin of this huge capital will be completed in thirty-six hours by bombs and shells fired from our batteries just as the suburbs will be destroyed by your own guns. His Majesty is convinced that considerations such as these will induce Your Highness to abandon your determination, which, after all, would only delay the capture of the city for a few hours. In fine, should Your Highness not decide to save the city, its population, plunged by your fault into hideous woe, instead of being loyal subjects, will become hostile to your house."

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This letter did not shake the Archduke from his purpose. Wearied by such obstinacy the Emperor at length gave orders for two batteries to open fire. An hour later bombs and shells rained upon the town. With true German phlegm, the populace came out upon the ramparts to watch the effect of the firing; to them the spectacle seemed far more interesting than appalling. Some shells had already burst in the courtyard of the Imperial Palace, when a trumpeter came out of the town to announce the fact that the Archduchess Marie Louise had not been able to follow her father. She was lying ill in the Palace, and exposed to all the perils of bombardment. The Emperor at once ordered the artillery to aim in another direction, so that the bombs and shells might pass right over the Palace. The Archduke could not long hold out against so energetic an assault. He fled, abandoning Vienna to its conquerors.

On the 12th of May the Emperor entered Vienna, a month after the occupation of Munich by the Austrians. This circumstance greatly impressed everybody, and largely helped to strengthen the superstitious notions which all the soldiery cherished concerning their chief. "Why, he's done it all in the time needed to travel there," cried one,

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"the man must be a god!" "A devil, more likely!" said the Austrians, whose amazement was simply indescribable. So stunned were they that they let their arms be taken from them without offering the slightest resistance, without even attempting to run away, being firmly convinced that the Emperor and his guards were not men, and that sooner or later they would perforce fall into the hands of these supernatural foes.

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CHAPTER IX

The Emperor at Schönbrunn—Description of this residence—The Emperor's apartments—Discomforts of stoves—Marie Thérèse's chair—Versailles, La Malmaison and Schönbrunn—La Gloriette—The Ruins—Marie Thévèse's kiosque and menagerie—The Emperor reviews the troops—His rewards—He personally inspects the soldiers—He examines their kit—His good-nature—Unexpected commands—Prince de Salm—General Bertrand and the baggage.

THE Emperor did not stay at Vienna; he made the castle of Schönbrunn his headquarters: an Imperial residence situated about half a league from the city. The guards were encamped on the ground in front of the castle.

Built in 1754 by the Empress Marie Thérèse, Schönbrunn had an admirable position; its architecture, if defective and irregular, was yet of a majestic, imposing type. To reach it, one has to cross the bridge across the little river Vienna. Four stone sphinxes ornament this bridge, which is very large and well built. Facing the bridge there is a handsome gate opening on to a large courtyard, spacious enough for seven or eight thousand men to

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manœuvre in. The courtyard is in the form of a quadrangle surrounded by covered galleries, and ornamented with two large basins in which are marble statues. On both sides of the gateway are two huge obelisks of pink stone surmounted by gilt eagles.

In German Schönbrunn means "fair spring," and the name is derived from a fresh and sparkling spring which is situated in the park. It wells forth from a little mound on which a tiny grotto has been built carved within so as to resemble stalactites. Inside the grotto is a recumbent naiad holding a horn, from which the water falls down into a marble basin. In summer this little nook is deliciously cool.

The interior of the palace merits nothing but praise. The furniture is sumptuous and in taste both original and distinguished. The Emperor's bedroom, the only place in the whole edifice where there was a chimney, was upholstered in Chinese lacquer wood of great antiquity, yet the painting and gilding were still quite fresh. The study adjoining was decorated in a like way. All these apartments, except the bedroom, were heated in winter by immense stoves, which sadly spoiled the effect of the other furniture. Between the study and the bedroom there was a strange apparatus called a

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"flying chair," a sort of mechanical seat, which had been constructed for the Empress Marie Thérèse, and which served to transport her from one floor to another, so that she was not obliged to go up and down the staircase like everyone else. The machine was worked in the same way as at theatres, by cords, pulleys, and a counter-weight.

The handsome park and garden attached to the palace were far less extensive than befitted an Imperial residence, but, on the other hand, nothing prettier nor more perfectly arranged could possibly have been found. The Versailles park is grander, more majestic, but it has not the picturesqueness, the irregularity, the fantastic, unlooked-for effects of the Schönbrunn park. Malmaison might rather be compared with it. In front of the inner façade there was a splendid lawn laid out with flower-beds; at one extremity there was a large marble basin ornamented by a group of statues representing the triumph of Neptune. This group was very handsome. French amateurs (who all of them desired to pose as knowing a great deal) declared that the women were more like Austrians than Greeks—they failed to detect the pliant supple grace of Hellenic models. As for me, I certainly thought these statues very remarkable.

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At the end of the grand avenue on the horizon line there is a hill overlooking the park. This was topped by a very pretty structure called *La Gloriette.* It is a circular gallery with windows, supported by a charming colonnade, with trophies hung thereon at intervals. Approaching from the Vienna high road, on entering the avenue it came suddenly into view, above the palace, and seemingly part of it. This vista was a most enchanting one.

What Austrians most admired in the palace of Schönbrunn was a bosquet, in which were the so-called "Ruins." A marble basin and plashing fountain, the remains of an aqueduct, and a temple, vases and tombstones, shattered bas-reliefs, headless statues and broken columns, all combined to produce the effect of veritable classic ruins if viewed at a distance. But on closer inspection the illusion vanished; the handiwork of the latter-day sculptor was everywhere apparent.

Yet if all the art treasures scattered about the park at Schönbrunn were not beyond reproach, what rich compensation did not Nature give! What fine trees, what velvety turf, what cool, refreshing shade! The lofty alleys were formed of trees whose slender tops were closely interwoven to the exclusion of all sunlight, while in other lesser paths one

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encountered at each turn some fresh and delightful surprise. At the end of the largest walk was the menagerie, one of the best in Europe. It was most ingeniously constructed, and might have served as a model. It was shaped like a star, and in the centre there was a very prettily-furnished kiosque, which the Empress Marie Thérèse had caused to be erected. Here she used to rest, and from it she could survey the entire menagerie. The rays of this star were all divided into different gardens, where elephants, buffaloes, camels, dromedaries, stags and kangaroos moved about, while in massive cages tigers, bears, leopards, lions and hyænas were confined. Swans, rare aquatic birds and amphibious creatures swam about in ponds surrounded by gratings. In this menagerie I noticed a most extraordinary animal, which the Emperor was going to send to France, but it died the day previous to the one fixed for its removal. This animal came from Poland; it was called *curus;* it was a sort of ox, only much larger than an ordinary one, with a mane like a lion's, short horns slightly curved, but enormously thick at the base.

Every morning at six o'clock the drums beat, and two or three hours afterwards the troops for parade assembled in the large courtyard. At ten

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o'clock precisely the Emperor came down the grand staircase and joined his staff.

It is impossible to form an idea of these parades, which were totally unlike any of those held in Paris. The Emperor used to descend to the very minutest details, examining each man in turn, looking him through to see if he were happy or discontented. He used to question the officers, and very often the men. It was usually then that His Majesty conferred promotion upon those who deserved it. He would sometimes ask a colonel who was the bravest officer in the regiment, and the answer was instantly forthcoming; a frank reply, and the Emperor knew as much. When the colonel had told him, His Majesty would appeal to all the officers themselves, "Who is the bravest among you?" "Sire, it is so-and-so." The two answers almost always tallied. "Very well, then," the Emperor would say, "I create him a baron, and so reward, not only his personal valour, but that of the regiment to which he belongs. And he owes this promotion not to me alone, but also to the esteem of his comrades."

Towards the soldiers he behaved in the same way. Those most distinguished for their courage and good conduct were promoted, or received gratuities and even pensions. The Emperor once gave 1,200

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francs to a soldier who had only lately joined, and who had forced his way through the enemy's squadron, carrying his wounded colonel on his back, protecting him as if he were his own father.

At these parades the Emperor would personally inspect each man's kit, unfastening their haversacks, and scrutinising their uniforms. He would take a gun out of the hands of some pale, tired-looking youngster and say kindly, "It's very heavy, isn't it?" He often drilled them himself, his substitutes being Generals Dorsenne, Curial and Mouton. Sometimes, too, he had strange fancies. One morning, for instance, as one of the confederation regiments was being drilled, His Majesty turned round to the orderly officers and addressing Prince de Salm, who was of their number, said, "M. de Salm, those fellows ought to make your acquaintance; come here and give them the order to charge in twelve-time." The young Prince blushed deeply, but, no whit disconcerted, bowed, drew his sword in most graceful style, and did as the Emperor wished with such ease and precision that His Majesty was charmed.

Another day some of the engineers were going by with about forty baggage waggons. The Emperor cried "Halt!" and pointing out a large waggon to General Bertrand, told him to call one of the officers.

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"What's in that waggon?"

"Sire, there are ropes, sacks of nails, axes, saws——"

"How many things are there in all?"

The officer gave the exact number, and to verify his statement the Emperor had the waggon unloaded, and counted over every single thing it contained, finding all correct. Then, to make sure that nothing had been left behind in the waggon, the Emperor, resting his foot on the spokes of one of the wheels, jumped up to look. There was a loud gleeful murmur among the ranks. "Bravo! that's right! that's the way to make sure you're not cheated!"

It was things like these that caused the Emperor to be adored by his soldiers.

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CHAPTER X

Attempt upon the Emperor's life—General Rapp's penetration—Arrest of Frederic Stabs—The fanatical student—Incredible perseverance—The Duke of Rovigo with the Emperor—Stabs interrogated by the Emperor—The Emperor's compassion—The portrait—The Emperor astonished—Stabs is callous—M. Corvisart examines him—Pardon twice offered and twice refused—His Majesty's emotion—Stabs condemned—Four days' fast—Stabs' last words.

AT one of the reviews of which I have just been speaking, which usually drew large crowds of curious spectators, who came thither expressly from Vienna and thereabouts, the Emperor just escaped being assassinated. It was the 13th of October; His Majesty had just dismounted and was crossing the courtyard on foot, accompanied by Prince de Neufchâtel and General Rapp, when a fairly respectable-looking young man, pushing through the crowd, asked in bad French if he might speak to the Emperor. His Majesty good-naturedly received him, but not understanding his curious language, requested General Rapp to see what the young

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fellow wanted. The General asked him several questions, but not altogether satisfied with the replies he got, he ordered the officer of gendarmerie to remove him. A subaltern then led the young man outside the ring formed by the staff, and pushed him back into the crowd. No one thought any more about him, when suddenly the Emperor, on turning round, spied this sham petitioner coming at him again, holding his right hand to his breast, as if about to draw some petition from the pocket of his coat. General Rapp caught the fellow by the arm and said to him, "Sir, I sent you away once. What is it you want?" He was slinking off again, when the General, who thought he looked a suspicious character, ordered the officer of gendarmerie to arrest him. The latter motioned his men to come forward, and they seized him somewhat roughly, so that his coat was unbuttoned, and one of the gendarmes spied what looked like a roll of papers sticking out of it. It turned out to be a large kitchen knife wrapped in a sort of sheath of grey paper. The gendarmes hereupon took him into custody, and he was brought before General Savary.

The young man was a student, the son of a Protestant clergyman in Naumburg. His name was Frederick Stabs, and he may have been eighteen or

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nineteen years old. His face was pale and his features of a feminine cast. He never for an instant denied that he had meant to kill the Emperor. On the contrary, he boasted about it, and greatly regretted that circumstances had prevented the accomplishment of his design. He had left his father's house on horseback, but want of money had forced him to sell the horse on the road. None of his relatives knew of his plan. The day after leaving home he wrote, telling his father not to be anxious about him or the horse, saying that he had long promised someone to pay a visit to Vienna, and that soon his family would be proud to hear everyone talking about him. He had only been two days in Vienna, and he had at once made enquiries as to the Emperor's habits. Hearing that he reviewed the troops every morning in the palace courtyard, he came there in order to get a knowledge of the locality. Next day he made his attempt and was arrested.

After questioning Stabs the Duke of Rovigo went to see the Emperor, who had returned to his apartments, and told him what a terrible escape he had just had. At first the Emperor shrugged his shoulders, but on seeing the knife found on Stabs he said, "Ah! ah! fetch the young man; I should

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like to speak to him." The Duke went out and soon returned with Stabs. As the latter entered, the Emperor, with a gesture of compassion, said to the Prince of Neufchâtel, "Why, he is but a child!" An interpreter was brought, and the examination began.

At first His Majesty asked the assassin if he had already seen him anywhere.

"Yes," replied Stabs, "I saw you last year at Erfurt."

"In your eyes, apparently, a crime is of no account. Why did you want to kill me?"

"To kill you is not a crime; on the contrary, it is the duty of every good German. I wanted to kill you because you are the oppressor of Germany."

"It was not I who began the war."

"Yes, it was."

"Whose portrait is this?" (the Emperor had in his hand the portrait of a woman which was found on Stabs).

"It is that of my dearest friend, the adopted daughter of my father."

"What? And you are a murderer? Are you not afraid of grieving and of losing those whom you love?"

"I wished to do my duty; nothing could stop me."

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"But how did you mean to strike me?"

"I was first going to ask you if we should soon have peace, and had you said 'No,' I should have stabbed you."

"He is mad," said the Emperor to the by-standers, "he is decidedly mad."

Then, resuming his questions:

"And how did you expect to escape by stabbing me when surrounded by all my soldiers?"

"I well knew what risk I was running; in fact I am astonished that I am alive now."

The Emperor was greatly struck by this last remark. He remained silent for a moment and gazed hard at Stabs, who met his look without flinching. Then the Emperor continued:

"She whom you love will be much grieved?"

"Oh, yes, of course she will, but only because I have not succeeded, for she hates you at least as much as I do."

"Suppose I were to pardon you?"

"You would do wrong, for I should again try to kill you."

The Emperor then sent for M. Corvisart, and said:

"This young man is either ill or mad, one or the other."

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"Nothing of the sort," cried Stabs, sharply.

M. Corvisart on arriving felt the youth's pulse.

"Monsieur is quite well," said he.

"There, I told you so," retorted Stabs, in a tone of triumph.

"Well, Doctor," said the Emperor, "this young man who is quite well has come a hundred leagues in order to murder me."

In spite of the Doctor's statement and Stabs' avowal, the Emperor, touched by the culprit's coolness and assurance, again offered him a free pardon, the only condition imposed being that he should express some contrition for his crime. But Stabs merely reiterated that all that he regretted was his failure. Then the Emperor gave him up to justice.

On being led away to prison he persisted in his statement, and ere long was tried by court-martial, found guilty, and sentenced. His case did not come on till the 17th, and from the 13th (the day of his arrest) to that date he refused food of any sort, saying that he should have strength enough left to meet his death. The Emperor ordered the execution to be delayed as long as possible, hoping that Stabs might at the last moment repent, but he was obdurate. On being

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led out to the place where he was to be shot, when some folk said that peace had just been signed, he cried out in a loud voice, "Long live liberty! Long live Germany!" These were his last words.

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CHAPTER XI

The Emperor's gallant adventures at Schönbrunn—Promenading in the Prater—The young widow—the Emperor's gracious demeanour—Another conquest—Madame follows the Emperor to Bavaria—Her death in Paris—The young enthusiast—Proposals eagerly entertained—The Emperor's astonishment—Innocence respected—A girl's dowry—The Emperor's supper—Greedy Roustan—Constant's perplexity—The Emperor sups off Roustan's leavings.

DURING his stay at Schönbrunn the Emperor had no lack of gallant adventures. One day, when in Vienna, he was walking in the Prater, attended by only a few of his suite, a young German lady, widow of a very wealthy merchant, recognised him, and remarked to the other ladies with her, "It is he!" The exclamation was heard by His Majesty, who stopped short and, smiling, saluted the ladies. The fair speaker herself blushed rosy red, and it was by such an unmistakable sign that the Emperor recognised her. He looked at her for a long while and then resumed his walk.

For Sovereigns there are neither long waitings

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nor great difficulties. This new conquest of His Majesty's was as speedy as the others. In order not to be separated from her illustrious lover, Madame —— followed the army to Bavaria, and afterwards came to live in Paris, where she died in 1812.

Another day the Emperor happened to notice a charming young lady. It was one morning in the outskirts of Schönbrunn. Someone was commissioned to see the lady and tell her, from the Emperor, that he wished to meet her at the castle on the following evening. Chance favoured His Majesty in marvellous fashion, for the girl seemed quite disposed to respond to the invitation, as the brilliant renown of the Emperor had deeply impressed her. She eagerly consented to come to the château. At the time appointed the same messenger went to fetch her, and on her arrival I received her and showed her into the Emperor's apartments. She did not know French, but she spoke Italian perfectly, so it was easy for the Emperor to converse with her. He was surprised to learn that this young lady belonged to an honourable Viennese family, and that in coming to see him she had merely been actuated by a wish to express to him her profound admiration. The Emperor respected the girl's inno-

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cence, caused her to be taken back to her parents, and gave her a handsome dowry.

At Schönbrunn, as in Paris, the Emperor always dined at six o'clock; but as he sometimes worked until a late hour at night, a light supper was always prepared for him, enclosed in a little wicker basket covered with oilcloth, with a lock and key attached. There were two keys, the head of the culinary department having one and I the other. It was I alone who had to look after this little basket; and as the Emperor was an extraordinarily frugal man, he rarely or never asked for some supper. One evening Roustan, who had been tearing about all day long in the service of his master, was in the little room adjoining the Emperor's. He saw me as I was helping His Majesty to go to bed, and, casting a hungry glance at the supper-basket, said to me in his broken French, "Me eat wing chicken; me very hungry."

At first I refused, but at last, knowing that the Emperor had gone to bed, and as it seemed unlikely that he would fancy any supper that night, I let Roustan do what he wanted. In great glee he tore off a leg of the chicken, then a wing, and soon there would not have been any left if suddenly the bell had not rung loudly. I entered the room, and to

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my horror the Emperor said to me, "Constant, where's my chicken?" Fancy my embarrassment! For there was only one, and at that time of night how could I manage to get another? However, I decided what I would do. As it was my place to carve the chicken, I thought it would be easy for me to prevent the Emperor from noticing the absence of the leg and wing which Roustan had eaten. So I came back courageously with the chicken turned over on the dish. Roustan came in too, for I was quite ready, if there was any scolding, to share it with him. I cut off the remaining wing and handed it to the Emperor. He refused it, saying, "Give me the chicken and I'll help myself." This time there was no way to save ourselves; the dismembered chicken had to be placed before His Majesty.

"Hullo! Since when is it that chickens have got only one leg and one wing? Oh, I see, I am supposed to make my supper off other people's leavings. And who was it that has just eaten up half my supper?"

I looked at Roustan, who, greatly confused, stammered out:

"Me very hungry, Sire; me eat leg and wing!"

"Oh, it was you, was it, you rogue? Just let me catch you at it again!"

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And without another word the Emperor ate the remaining leg and wing.

Next day, when dressing, he sent for the Grand Marshal to tell him something, and in the course of their talk he said, "Just guess what I had for supper last night. Some of M. Roustan's leavings, if you please! The rogue had the impudence to eat half my chicken!" At that moment Roustan entered. "Come here, you rogue!" continued the Emperor. "If ever that happens again you shall pay dearly for it, do you hear?" So saying, he pulled Roustan's ears lustily and laughed with all his might.

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CHAPTER XII

Battle of Essling—The two Dukes—The Duke de Montebello's rudeness—Lannes' presentiments—He is wounded in action—The Emperor's distress—He kneels beside the Marshal—Lannes' heroism—Probable cause of his death—The old grenadiers weep at the news—The Emperor greatly grieved—The Marshal's last words—The body embalmed—A horrible spectacle—Grief of the Duchess de Montebello—She desires to leave the service of the Empress.

On the 22nd of May, ten days after the triumphal entry of the Emperor into the Austrian capital, the battle of Essling was fought, which lasted from four a.m. to six p.m., a battle of sad memory for all the veteran soldiers of the Empire, because it claimed the life of perhaps the bravest of them all—the life of the Duke de Montebello, the Emperor's devoted friend, who alone with Marshal Augereau enjoyed the privilege of frankly telling him to his face just what he thought.

On the eve of the battle the Marshal came to see His Majesty, whom he found surrounded by several persons. The Duke de —— always sought

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to thrust himself between the Emperor and those who were speaking to him. The Duke de Montebello, seeing that the Duke de —— was up to his usual tricks, caught him by the facings of his uniform, making him spin round, and said, "Get out of the way, do! The Emperor does not want you to protect him now. On the battle-field, strange to say, you are such a long way off that nobody ever catches sight of you, while here, one can never say a word to the Emperor but you are in the road!" The Duke de —— was furious, and glanced alternatively at the Marshal and the Emperor, who contented himself by saying, "Gently, Lannes."

That evening, in the ante-chamber, this rude speech of the Marshal was much discussed. An officer belonging to the army of Egypt said that it was not to be wondered at, since Lannes (the Duke de Montebello) would never forgive the Duke de —— for the death of the three hundred sick who were poisoned at Jaffa.

Doctor Lannefranque, one of those who attended the unfortunate Marshal Lannes, said that the latter, when mounting his horse to go into action, had sinister forebodings. He stopped, seized the doctor's hand and shook it warmly, saying,

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with a sad smile, "*Au revoir*, it won't be long before you join us. There'll be some work for you to-day, and for those gentlemen, too," pointing to the other surgeons who were with the doctor.

"My Lord Duke," replied M. Lannefranque, "this day will but add to your glory."

"My glory!" cried the Marshal, interrupting him. "Look here, to be quite frank with you, I don't like the looks of this battle, and, whatever the issue of it, it will be my last."

The Doctor was about to ask him what he meant, but the Marshal galloped off and was soon out of sight.

On the morning of the battle, about six or seven o'clock, the Austrians were already beaten, when an aide-de-camp came to tell His Majesty that the sudden rising of the Danube had set a lot of timber afloat which had broken down the bridge between Essling and the island of Lobau. Thus the artillery reserves and part of the heavy cavalry were left inactive on the other river-bank. This mishap altered the Emperor's plan for an immediate advance, and the enemy gained fresh courage in consequence. The Duke of Montebello was left in charge of the battlefield and took up his position with the village of Essling in his rear.

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He held his ground from nine o'clock a.m. until the evening, and by seven p.m. the battle was won. But at six o'clock the unfortunate Marshal, standing on earthworks to watch the enemy's movements, was struck by a shell, which smashed his right thigh and left knee-cap.

He thought at first that he had only a few moments to live, and was carried on a stretcher to the Emperor, whom he wished to embrace, he said, before he died. The Emperor, seeing him thus smothered in blood, had the stretcher placed on the ground, and kneeling down, took the Marshal in his arms and wept. "Lannes," said he, "do you know me?"

"Yes, Sire . . . you're going to lose your best friend."

"No, no, you'll live. Won't he, Dr. Larrey? You'll guarantee that he will?"

Some of the wounded, hearing His Majesty speak thus, tried to prop themselves up on their elbows and raise a cry of "Long live the Emperor!" The surgeons transported the Marshal to a little riverside village called Ebersdorf, which was close to the battlefield. In a brewery they found a room over a stable where it was stiflingly hot, and the gruesome smell of dead bodies that

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lay round about the house was thus even more unendurable. But there was nothing better to be had. The Marshal bore the amputation of his thigh with heroic courage, but the fever which instantly ensued was so violent that, fearing he might die under the operation, the surgeons hesitated to amputate the other leg. This fever was partly due to the Marshal having eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. At last Doctors Larrey, Yvan, Paulet and Lannefranque decided to perform the second operation, and when it was over the patient's calm condition let them hope that they might save his life. But this was not to be. The fever increased and assumed a most alarming character. In spite of the care of skilful surgeons, assisted by Dr. Frank, the most famous physician in Europe, the poor Marshal breathed his last on the 31st of May, at five a.m. He was hardly forty years old.

During his eight days' agony—the only term for suffering such as his—the Emperor often went to see him, always coming away in despair. I also visited the Marshal every day on behalf of the Emperor, and admired the patience with which he bore his pain. Yet he had no hope. He knew that he was dying; it was written on the faces

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of all about him. What a touching and terrible thing it was to see all the veteran soldiers, the grenadiers of the guard, who until now had been perfectly stolid, crying and sobbing like children! In moments such as these, how horrible war seemed!

On the eve of his death the Marshal said to me, "I can see, my dear Constant, that I am going to die. I want your master always to have about him men who are as devoted to him as I. Tell the Emperor I wish to speak to him." I was just going when the Emperor appeared. Then there was a great silence, and everybody went out, but as the door remained ajar we could hear part of the conversation. It was a long and painful one. The Marshal reminded the Emperor of his past services, and concluded with the following words, uttered in a voice that was still clear and firm, "It is not in order to interest you in my family that I speak to you like this; I need not recommend my wife and children to your care, since, as I am dying for you, your glory commands you to protect them; nor do I fear that by these final friendly reproaches of mine I shall alter your generous intentions towards them. You have just made a great blunder, and though you have lost your best friend by it, it won't be a lesson to you. Your ambition is insatiable; it

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will ruin you. Recklessly and without the need for it, you sacrifice the men who serve you best, and when they are dead you don't regret their loss. You have only flatterers about you; I don't see a single real friend who dares to tell you the truth. You will be betrayed and forsaken. Make haste and finish this war; that is what everyone wishes. You will never be more powerful than you are now, but you might well be more loved. Forgive these truths from a dying man, from . . . a dying man . . . who loves you . . ."

As he ended, the Marshal held out his hand to the Emperor, who embraced him, weeping, and made no reply.

On the day of the Marshal's death his body was given over to Dr. Larrey and to M. de Gassicourt, the Emperor's chemist-in-ordinary, with orders to embalm the remains like those of Colonel Morland, who was killed at Austerlitz. Accordingly the corpse was moved to Schönbrunn and placed in the left wing of the castle, at a proper distance from the rooms that were inhabited. In a few hours putrefaction set in, and the mutilated corpse had to be placed in a bath containing a strong solution of corrosive sublimate. This operation was extremely dangerous and took a long time. M. de Gassicourt

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is to be praised for his great courage in undertaking it; and despite every precaution, the perfumes burnt in the chamber, the fetid odour from the corpse and the noxious fumes of the corrosive sublimate made this distinguished chemist extremely unwell.

In common with others I had the morbid curiosity to go and see the Marshal's body when in this state. It was an appalling sight. The trunk, which lay soaking in the solution, was hideously swollen, while the head, being outside the bath, had become strangely shrivelled. The facial muscles were contracted in a ghastly fashion, while the eyes, wide open, were starting from their sockets.

After the body had remained in the corrosive sublimate for a week, it was placed in a specially-made cask filled with the same liquid. In this cask the body was removed from Schönbrunn to Strasburg. Here it was taken out and hung up to dry, being afterwards swathed, Egyptian fashion, with bands, only the face being left bare. This task was performed by M. Fortin, a young surgeon, who in 1807, by his courage and perseverance, saved nine hundred patients who had been abandoned by all the doctors and nurses in a hospital near Dantzig when a dreadful epidemic broke out there.

In the month of March, 1810, the Duchess de

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Montebello, when passing through Strasburg in attendance upon the Empress Marie Louise, wished to see once more the husband she had so dearly loved. M. Fortin, in a letter to his friend, M. de Gassicourt, gives the following account of this:

"Thanks to your care," he writes, "the embalming of the Marshal is a complete success. When I took the body out of the cask I found it in a state of perfect preservation. In the basement of the mayor's house I hung it on a cord, and with the help of a stove I dried it. Then I had a handsome coffin made of hard wood, highly polished, and now the Marshal, swathed in bands and with his face exposed, lies in his open coffin next to General Saint-Hilaire, in an underground vault of which I have the key. A sentinel is on duty night and day. M. Wangen de Geroldseck, the mayor of Strasburg, has accorded me every facility.

"All was in this state when, an hour after the arrival of Her Majesty the Empress, the Duchess de Montebello sent me word by M. Crétu, her cousin, that she desired to see me. I went. The Duchess asked me many questions, and complimented me highly upon my work. Then she tremblingly told me of her desire to see yet once more the body of her husband. I hesitated for a moment before

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replying, and, foreseeing the effect upon her of such a sad sight, I replied that the orders I had received were to deny everyone admission. Yet she pressed me so to consent that at last I did so. She arranged that I should fetch her at midnight, and said that one of her relatives would accompany her.

"I went to the Duchess at the hour fixed. As soon as she saw me she rose and said she was ready to accompany me. I ventured to detain her for a moment, begging her to consider if she could bear the shock. I told her something of the awful state in which she would find the Marshal, but she replied that she was quite ready. M. Crétu gave her his arm and we set out.

"On reaching the *mairie*, Madame de Montebello told her servants to wait, and we three slowly descended to the subterranean vault. The dim light of a lantern scarcely showed us the way. The trembling Duchess tried to assume a brave air, yet when she entered, the death-like silence, the faint, ghastly light of the vault, and the sight of the corpse, stark in its shroud, produced the effect that I had anticipated. Uttering a cry of grief, she fainted. I held her up in my arms and made her sit down. I had come prepared with restoratives in case of emergency. I gave her all

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necessary assistance. In a few moments she recovered, and we advised her to come away, but she refused, and, rising, approached the coffin and slowly walked round it; then, pausing and letting her crossed hands fall, she remained motionless for awhile, gazing at her husband's lifeless face, and watering it with her tears. Suddenly, in a voice half choked with sobs, she cried, 'My God! my God! How changed he is!' I motioned to M. Crétu that it was time to go, but we could only induce the Duchess to leave by promising to bring her back again the next day, a promise which was never intended to be kept. I promptly closed the door, offered my arm to the Duchess, which she accepted, and on leaving the building I bade her good-bye, but she insisted on driving me home in her own carriage, and during the brief journey she sobbed bitterly, saying, as the carriage stopped, in a tone of inexpressible kindness, 'Sir, I shall never forget the important service that you have just done me.'"

Long after, the Emperor and the Empress Marie Louise were visiting a porcelain factory at Sèvres, the Duchess de Montebello being in attendance as lady-in-waiting. Noticing a handsome bust of Marshal Lannes in *biscuit*, most cleverly executed, the

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Emperor stopped, and not perceiving how pale the Duchess had grown, he asked her, bluntly, what she thought of this bust, and if it were a good likeness. The widow felt her heart-wound bleed afresh; she could not answer, but, bursting into tears, withdrew. Some days elapsed before she re-appeared at Court. Besides this sudden question which re-awakened all her grief, the inconceivable thoughtlessness that the Emperor displayed wounded her so deeply that her friends had much difficulty in inducing her to continue in the Empress's service.

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CHAPTER XIII

Disasters of the battle of Essling—Murmurings of the troops—Marshal Masséna's bravery—Zeal of the army-surgeons—"My brave surgeons!"—M. Larrey—Horse-broth—Soup made in cuirasses—Fortitude of the sufferers—A gunner's suicide—The old German porter—The Princess de Lichtenstein—General Dorsenne—Good fare and dirty table-linen—Outrageous letter to the Princess de Lichtenstein—The Emperor is furious—His filial piety—The Princess indulgent—The Emperor pardons—M. Larrey's remonstrances—Two anecdotes about the famous surgeon.

FROM every point of view the battle of Essling proved disastrous. Twelve thousand French were killed. The cause of all this trouble originated in the breaking of the bridges, which might have been foreseen and prevented, so I think, as the same accident occurred two or three days before the battle. The soldiers murmured loudly. Several of the infantry regiments shouted out to their generals to get off their horses and come and fight on foot along with them.

But this discontent in no wise robbed them of their courage and their patience. Some regiments

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remained five hours, rifle in hand, without budging, exposed to a most pitiless fire. Three times that evening the Emperor sent to General Masséna to know if he could hold his ground. The brave commander refused to budge till nightfall. "I won't move," said he, "or those beggars the Austrians will be over-proud of their success!"

It was the Marshal's firmness that saved the day. But, as he himself said next morning, luck was always in his favour. At the outset of the battle he noticed that one of his stirrups was too long. He called a soldier, and asked him to shorten it. While this was being done, he rested his leg on the horse's neck. A bomb burst, killing the soldier, and cutting the stirrup in two. "There!" said he, drily, "now I shall have to dismount and get another saddle!"

The surgeons and members of the Army Service Corps behaved admirably throughout this terrible day. They showed dauntless zeal and courage, and an activity at which even the Emperor was surprised. He constantly kept calling them, as he passed by, "My brave surgeons!" M. Larrey specially distinguished himself as a master of resource. Having operated upon all the wounded of the Guards, who were all huddled together in the isle of Lobau, he

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asked if there was any broth to give them. The attendants said "No." "Very well, make some," he replied, pointing to several horses near him; "make some with these horses." They belonged to a general. When they were about to obey Dr. Larrey's order, the owner wrathfully exclaimed that they should not touch his.

"Very well, then, take mine," said the gallant surgeon; "kill them, and let my comrades here have some broth." They did as he bade them, and as there was no pot to boil the soup in, they took a cuirass, and, as there was no salt to season it, they used gunpowder. Marshal Masséna tasted this broth and found it excellent.

One hardly knows what to admire most, the zeal of the army doctors and the courage with which they faced danger and attended to the wounded amid a rain of bullets, or the stoical fortitude of the soldiers, who, lying about on the ground, one without an arm and another without a leg, talked to each other of their various campaigns, while waiting to be operated upon. Some even strove to be polite. "Doctor, do begin upon my neighbour first, he is suffering more pain than I am. I can wait a bit."

A gunner had both legs cut off by a shell.

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Two of his comrades picked him up, and with the boughs of trees made a stretcher on which they proceeded to carry him to the island. The poor fellow never uttered a cry. "I am so thirsty," said he now and again to his bearers. As they were crossing one of the bridges, he begged them to stop, and bring him a little wine or brandy to revive him. They went off to fetch some, and they had not gone twenty paces when the gunner shouted to them, "Don't hurry, comrades, I shall be there before you! Long live France!" Then, making one final effort, he rolled over into the Danube.

Later on the conduct of a surgeon-major of the Imperial Guard well-nigh served to compromise the whole regiment in the Emperor's estimation. Monsieur M., the surgeon in question, was quartered with General Dorsenne and other officers in a charming country-house, belonging to the Princess de Lichtenstein. The German housekeeper, a rude, testy old fellow, waited upon them with obvious disgust, and played them all the tricks he possibly could. It was hopeless, for instance, to ask him for clean linen for the bed or the table; he always pretended not to hear.

General Dorsenne wrote to the Princess to

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complain. No doubt she gave orders in consequence, but the General's letter remained unanswered. Several days elapsed; the napkins had not been changed for a month. Suddenly the General took it into his head to give a grand supper. There were Rhenish and Hungarian wines in plenty; and after these, punch was served. The host was warmly complimented on his excellent hospitality, but to the praise were added sundry energetic protests concerning the doubtful whiteness of the table-cloth and the greasy state of the napkins. General Dorsenne excused himself on the score of the old butler's bad temper and stinginess, in which he was backed up by the Princess's scant courtesy.

"But we won't stand that!" cried the merry guests in chorus. "This hostess who ignores us thus must be brought to her bearings. Look here, M., here's pen and ink; write her a stinger; we must teach this German Princess manners! French officers, victors like ourselves, to be given filthy napkins and greasy table-cloths! It's monstrous!"

Monsieur M. proved an all too faithful exponent of the sentiments of those present. Excited as he was by the fumes of Hungarian wine, he wrote the Princess de Lichtenstein a letter, such as, in

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Carnival time even, one would not dare to send to the lowest prostitute. Imagine the feelings of Madame de Lichtenstein on reading this effusion, a wild jumble of the most obscene phrases culled from the choice lingo of the barrack-room! She needed the testimony of a third party before she could believe that the signature, "M——, Surgeon-Major of the Imperial French Guard," was not the clumsy forgery of some wretched drunkard.

In her deep indignation the Princess went to General Andréossy, Governor of Vienna on behalf of His Majesty. She showed him this letter, and begged him to take steps to punish the sender. The General, more enraged than herself, instantly drove to Schönbrunn, where he arrived just as the troops were on parade. He handed the fatal letter to the Emperor, who at once began to read it. His Majesty started back, his face grew flushed with anger, and in a terrible voice he told the Grand Marshal to bring Monsieur M. before him. Everybody trembled.

"Was it you who wrote this abomination?"

"Sire, I——"

"Answer, I command you! Was it you?"

"Yes, Sire; it was after supper; I did not think what I was doing; I——"

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"Wretch!" cried His Majesty, in tones that terrified all present. "You deserve to be shot where you stand! How *dare* you insult a woman in this cowardly fashion? And an aged woman, too! Haven't you got a mother? I always respect and honour every aged woman, because she reminds me of my own mother!"

"Sire, I am to blame, I confess, but I am deeply sorry. Deign to remember my past services. I have been through eighteen campaigns; I am the father of a family."

This last speech seemed to irritate the Emperor more.

"Arrest him!" he cried; "tear off his decoration; he is not worthy to wear it! Let him be tried and sentenced within twenty-four hours!" Then, turning to his staff, who were one and all thunderstruck:

"See here, gentlemen, just read this! See how this blackguard treats a Princess, at the very moment when her husband is negotiating peace with me!"

That day the parade soon came to an end. Immediately afterwards, General Dorsenne and Dr. Larrey hastened to the Princess de Lichtenstein, and told her what had just occurred, offering her

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the most abject excuses in the name of the whole regiment, and begging her to intercede for an unfortunate man who doubtless was greatly to blame, but who was mad when he wrote such a shocking letter.

"He is deeply sorry for what he has done, Madame," urged Dr. Larrey, "and courageously awaits his punishment, his just punishment, for such an outrage. But he is one of the best officers in the French army; he is beloved and esteemed by all; he has saved the lives of thousands; and his distinguished talents form the mainstay, the sole mainstay, of his family. What will become of his poor wife and children if he is executed?"

"Executed!" exclaimed the Princess. "Good gracious! Have matters come to such a pass as that?"

Then General Dorsenne told her how furious the Emperor was, saying that he was far more indignant than she herself had been, until the Princess, greatly agitated, at once wrote off a letter to the Emperor, declaring that she was completely satisfied at the reparation she had received, and begging him to pardon the offender.

His Majesty read the letter, but made no reply. Then the Princess, who now was really

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alarmed, paid him another visit, saying that she deeply regretted ever having shown the letter to General Andréossy. Bent upon securing the culprit's pardon, she addressed a petition to the Emperor, in which she declared her intention of kneeling in prayer in her chapel, and of not rising from her knees until Heaven had induced His Majesty to grant a pardon. The Emperor could no longer refuse. He pardoned Monsieur M., who got off with a month's imprisonment. M. Larrey was enjoined by the Emperor to rate him soundly, and see to it that in future he was more careful not to compromise the honour of the distinguished regiment to which he belonged.

No one could have done this with greater tact and gentleness than Dr. Larrey. He was one of those who do good without hope of recompense. People knew this, and sometimes took advantage of his kindness.

At the battle of Wagram, General D'A., the son of a wealthy senator, had his shoulder fractured by a shell. Amputation was necessary. So dreadful an operation needed a practised hand, and M. Larrey was the only person to undertake it. He did so with complete success, but as the patient was of weakly, delicate constitution, he needed great and constant

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care. M. Larrey hardly ever left him, and told off two of his assistants to nurse the sick man alternately and change his bandages. The treatment was long and painful, but it resulted in a complete cure. When quite convalescent, the General took leave of the Emperor before returning to France. Promotion and decorations were the reward of his services to Sovereign and country, yet the way in which he discharged his debt towards the man who had saved his life was passing strange.

Just as he was getting into his carriage, General D'A. gave one of his brother officers a letter and a packet, saying, "I cannot leave Vienna without thanking M. Larrey; be so good as to let him have this mark of my gratitude. What a good fellow he is! I shall never forget all that he has done for me!"

Next day the friend executed this commission as requested. On receiving the letter and the packet, M. Larrey put both into his pocket, and after the parade was over, opened them. Then, giving the packet to M. de Gassicourt, he said, "Open it, and tell me what you think of it!" The letter was a very nice one, certainly, but the little box contained a diamond worth perhaps sixty francs!

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This shabby present reminds me of a splendid one, worthy of the recipient, which M. Larrey got from the Emperor during the Egyptian campaign. At the battle of Aboukir, when under fire, M. Larrey operated upon General Fucqières, who had been dangerously wounded in the shoulder. Believing himself to be near death, the General gave up his sword to Bonaparte, saying, "General, one day perhaps you will envy my fate." This sword Napoleon presented to M. Larrey, after having his name and the date of the battle engraved upon it. General Fucqières, however, did not die. The Doctor's skilful operation saved his life, and for seventeen years afterwards he had command of the invalided men at Avignon.

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CHAPTER XIV

Sundry reflections as to the army officers—The Prince de Neufchâtel and others—Prince Eugene—Marshals Oudinot, Davoust, Bessières—Generals Rapp, Lebrun, Lawriston, &c. —The dandy's dressing-case—The favourites—The infantry officers—Bravery and modesty—Real valour averse to duelling —The officers attached to their men—The grenadiers of the Guard breakfast on the eve of Wagram—The Emperor's orders despised—His indignation—The culprits shot—The dog of the regiment—Death of General Oudet—Constant is told something in confidence—The Philadelphists—A republican plot against Napoleon—Oudet chief conspirator —His intrepidity—Mysterious death—Suicides—Military banquet after Wagram—Daring theft—Heroic conduct of a Saxon surgeon.

It is not when in the presence of the enemy that one is able to detect differences in the manners and tone of military men. The exigencies of the service absorb all an officer's ideas and all his time, whatever his rank may be; and the uniformity of their occupation begets also a certain uniformity in their habits and their character. But when away from the battlefield their natural differences, and those produced by education, reappear. This I have noticed scores of times

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during an armistice, or while the Emperor was concluding the various peace-treaties which always crowned the most glorious of his campaigns. And I had occasion to exercise my observation anew during my long stay with the army at Schönbrunn.

Military *ton* in the army is one of the most difficult things to define. It differs according to rank, to the time of service, and to the kind of service. There are no real military men except those who form part of the line or who command it. In the soldier's opinion the Prince de Neufchâtel and his brilliant staff, the Grand Marshal, Generals Bertrand, Bader, D'Albe, and the rest, were only cabinet ministers, who, by their knowledge and attainments, might possibly be of service, yet to whom personal bravery was not indispensable.

The senior generals, such as Prince Eugene, Marshals Oudinot, Davoust, Bessières; His Majesty's aides-de-camp, Rapp, Lebrun, Lauriston, Mouton, and others, had perfect urbanity; everyone was received by them in an affable way; their dignity was devoid of arrogance; nor, if easy, were they too familiar, while their manners always bore the stamp of martial severity. This was not the idea which the army had of some of the orderly officers attached to the staff, the aides-de-camp, &c.

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While giving due consideration to their courage and cleverness, they were styled "the dandies of the army," who obtained favours that others deserved far more than they did; getting cordons and promotion for taking a few letters to some camp, without so much as ever setting eyes on the enemy; insulting by their luxurious habits the modest uniform of the bravest officers; for ever busied about their dress; and more carefully groomed in the midst of a battle than when they were lolling in the boudoir of a mistress. One of these fine gentlemen carried about with him a completely-stocked dressing-case, and instead of cartridges it contained bottles of scent, brushes, a mirror, tortoise-shell combs, and—would you believe it?—a pot of rouge! Not that they were wanting in bravery; for a mere glance they would have let themselves be killed; however, it very rarely happened that they were ever exposed to any danger. Foreigners were right in saying that as a rule the French officer is frivolous, arrogant, impertinent, and immoral, if they judged by these varnished popinjays, who, instead of learning and long service, had often no better claim to their position than the merit of having emigrated.

The officers of the line who had gone through

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several campaigns and won their epaulettes on the field of battle were, again, quite different. Grave, courteous, and obliging, there was a sort of brotherhood among them. Having suffered want and hardships themselves, they were ever ready to help others. Their talk was not specially brilliant or cultivated, but it was almost always interesting. As a rule all swagger disappeared while they were still quite young, the bravest being ever the most modest. No sticklers they for some false point of honour, for they knew their own worth, nor ever feared that they would be taxed with cowardice.

Extreme good-nature was, in their case, usually allied with an equally quick temper; yet a contradiction, an insult even, had not perforce to be wiped out with blood. Examples of such moderation, which only true courage displays, were by no means rare. Those generous-spirited ones who cared least about money, the gunners and hussars, were those who ran the greatest risks. At Wagram I saw a lieutenant give a louis for a bottle of brandy, which he at once distributed among his men. These brave officers were often deeply attached to their regiments, especially if they were distinguished ones, even refusing offers of promotion rather than be separated from their

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"boys," as they called them. It is such men as these that form the model by which to judge the French soldier. It is this kindheartedness, blended with military firmness, of officers to men, an attachment which the latter appreciated to the full; it is this immovable honour which served to distinguish our soldiers, *not*, as foreigners imagine, presumption, arrogance, and libertinism, which are but the attributes of certain parasites of glory.

In camp at Lobau, the day before the battle of Wagram, the Emperor was walking about outside his tent. He stopped short for a moment to watch the grenadiers of the Guard who were having their breakfast. "Well, my boys," said he, "how do you like the wine?" "It won't make us tipsy, Sire," replied a soldier. "That's our cellar, yonder!" And he pointed to the Danube. The Emperor, who had given orders that a good bottle of wine was to be served out to every man, was surprised to see the troops put on ordinary rations just before a battle. He asked the Prince de Neufchâtel why this was; enquiries were made, when it was found that three officials attached to the commissariat had sold for their own profit forty thousand bottles of wine intended for distribution, and which they thought of replacing by inferior

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stuff. This wine, when seized by the Imperial Guard, was found in a wealthy abbey, and was valued at thirty thousand florins. The offenders were forthwith arrested, tried, and condemned to death.

In the Lobau camp there was a dog, which throughout the whole army went by the name of "Corps-de-Garde." It was ugly, dirty, and old, but its moral qualities quickly made one forget its physical defects. It was also called the bravest dog of the Empire. It had received a bayonet-thrust at Marengo, and at Austerlitz a stray shot broke one of its paws. At that time it was attached to a regiment of dragoons, for it had no master. It stayed with a regiment and remained faithful as long as it got plenty to eat and was not beaten. A kick or a blow at once made it desert from the regiment and go on to another one. It was a wonderfully intelligent animal. Wherever the particular regiment of its choice was stationed, there it was, too; and it never mistook this for another. When the battle was at its height it was always to be found near the flag it had chosen. If it chanced to meet a soldier belonging to some regiment that it had forsaken, with drooping ears and tail it slunk away as

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quickly as possible, and scampered off to rejoin its new comrades-in-arms. When its regiment was marching, it ran on ahead as a scout, and by its barking warned the men of danger. More than once the dog saved its comrades from an ambush.

Among those officers who fell at Wagram, one of those most regretted by the men was General Oudet. He was one of the most courageous generals in the army; and I am specially reminded of him here by a memorandum which I have kept of a conversation between myself and another officer whose sincere friendship it was my privilege to enjoy. Our talk took place some years after Wagram; it was in 1812. Said Lieutenant-Colonel B. to me on that occasion:

"I must tell you, my dear Constant, of the strange adventure which befell me at Wagram. I did not relate this to you at the time, because I had promised to be silent. Yet, as there is now no one who can be compromised by my indiscretion, I may as well acquaint you with the mysterious discovery that I made at this time.

"You know that I was a very intimate friend of poor F——'s, whose loss we so greatly regretted. Of our young officers he was one of the merriest and most amiable, and his charming qualities made

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him beloved, especially by those who, like himself, had frank, jovial natures. Suddenly I noticed a change in him and in his comrades; they appeared gloomy, and if now they met together, it was not for merriment, but for mysterious talk carried on in whispers. I was repeatedly struck by this sudden change. It so happened that I often met them in out-of-the-way places, when, instead of greeting me cordially, as of yore, they appeared anxious to avoid me. At length, growing weary of this mystery that I failed to fathom, I one day took F—— aside and asked the meaning of such strange conduct.

"'You have anticipated me, my good fellow,' said he, 'I was going to tell you an important secret. I do not wish you to think that I mistrust you, but swear to me before I confide in you that you will not breathe my secret to a living soul.'

"When I had sworn, as requested, F—— said:

"'If I have never mentioned the "Philadelphists" to you, it was because I knew that reasons which I respect would never allow you to join them. But since you ask me for this secret, it would look like distrust, even like imprudence, if I did not divulge it to you. Certain patriots have leagued themselves together under the title of

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Philadelphists, their aim being to save the father-land from the dangers to which it is exposed. The Emperor Napoleon has sullied the glory of Bonaparte, First Consul. He saved our liberty for us, and now he has robbed us of it by the establishment of an aristocracy and by the *concordat*. The Society of Philadelphists has not yet framed any decisive measures to prevent the harm which ambition still is doing to France. When peace is restored to us, we shall be able to discover if henceforth it be impossible to induce Bonaparte to restore republican institutions. Meanwhile, however, we are overwhelmed with grief and with despair. The valiant chief of the Philadelphists, noble Oudet, has been assassinated! Who may worthily fill his place? No one was ever bolder or more eloquent than he. To a noble pride, to immovable strength of will, he joined the utmost kindness of heart. His first engagement served to display his energetic character. When he was prostrated by a bullet at San Bartolommeo, his comrades sought to remove him to a place of safety. "No, no," cried he, "don't trouble yourselves about me; go for the Spaniards! go for the Spaniards!"

"'"Are we to leave you to the enemy?" they asked.

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"'"Drive them back, then, if you don't want them to get hold of me!"

"'At the beginning of the Wagram campaign, he was colonel of the 9th regiment of the line, and on the eve of the great battle was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. His regiment formed part of the left wing commanded by Masséna. It was on that side that our line was momentarily broken. Oudet made frantic efforts to re-form it. With three lance-wounds and having lost a great deal of blood, he yet would not leave the battlefield, but caused himself to be fixed on to his saddle.

"'After the battle he was ordered to advance with his regiment for reconnoitring purposes, and then return to headquarters with a certain number of other officers to await further instructions. He accordingly did so, and returned during the night. Suddenly a volley of musketry warned him that he had fallen into a trap. In the darkness he fought desperately against his unknown foes. When day dawned, he was found riddled with bullets, and surrounded by the bodies of twenty officers who had been massacred with him. He was still breathing. He lived for three days, and the only phrases he could utter were concerning his beloved

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country, whose fate he deplored. As they were carrying his body out of the hospital to give it burial, several of his wounded companions tore off their bandages from sheer despair, while a sergeant-major stabbed himself beside the grave, and a lieutenant blew out his brains. That is why we are all so grieved,' added F——. I sought to prove to him that he was mistaken, and to show that these Philadelphic ideas were mad ones. While listening to my advice, he strenuously conjured me to keep the secret."

It was the day after the battle of Wagram, I think, that a good many officers lunched together close to the Emperor's tent. The generals sat on the grass, while the other officers stood round them. They talked much of the battle, narrating several noteworthy incidents, among others the following. One of His Majesty's orderlies said:

"I very nearly lost my handsomest horse. I had ridden him all day on the 5th, and wishing to give him a rest, I told my servant to lead him away, who let go the horse's bridle for an instant, while seeing to his own mount. In an instant the horse was stolen by a dragoon, who there and then offered it for sale to a cavalry officer, saying it was a horse that had been

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captured. I recognised it in the ranks and claimed it, proving by my saddle-bags and other gear that it was not a horse which had been taken from the Austrians. I repaid the officer the five louis he had given for this horse, which had cost me sixty."

Another incident, perhaps the most touching of all, was the story of M. Salsdorf, Saxon surgeon attached to Prince Christian's regiment. At the outset of the battle his leg was broken by a shell. As he lay on the ground, he noticed, about four yards off, M. Amédée de Kerbourg, an aide-de-camp, who, struck by a bullet, had fallen forward and was spitting blood. He saw that this officer would die of apoplexy unless he had medical aid, so, summoning all his strength, he crawled feebly along in the dust until he got near him, and by bleeding him saved his life.

M. de Kerbourg never had a chance of showing his gratitude, for the poor surgeon, after removal to Vienna, where his leg was amputated, died four days after the operation.

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CHAPTER XV

The Emperor at Schönbrunn—The Turkish girl—Her adventures—She marries a French officer—Madame Dartois returns to Constantinople—Terror and flight—Madame Dartois once more a widow—Application to the Emperor—M. Jaubert, the Duke de Bassano, and General Lebrun—The 15th of August at Vienna—Strange illumination—Dreadful accident—The commissary-general of the Vienna police—Strange story—Another attempt to assassinate the Emperor—Lord Paget's mistress—The plot fails—The Emperor's courage at Essling—His care for his soldiers—Society at Schönbrunn—The Emperor plays chess—He cheats, and is beaten—The Prince de Neufchâtel's adventure.

AT Schönbrunn, as elsewhere, the Emperor distinguished himself by kindly acts. I was specially impressed by one incident, which long furnished matter for talk; the details deserve recording.

A little girl of nine, belonging to a very wealthy and respected Constantinople family, was carried off by pirates one day when she was walking outside the town with a servant. The pirates transported their two captives to Anatolia and sold them. The little girl, who gave promise of being beautiful, was bought by a rich merchant

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of Broussa, who passed as the harshest, most ill-tempered man in the whole city. The child's pretty, unaffected ways, however, charmed his savage nature; he showed her special kindness, making a distinction between her and the other slaves, and giving her only light employment, such as tending flowers, &c. A European living close by offered to undertake her education, and the surly merchant was the more ready to accept this offer as he was fond of the girl, and intended to make her his wife when she reached a marriageable age. But the European had conceived a like idea, and as he was young, comely, intelligent, and very rich, he easily succeeded in winning the affections of the young slave, who one fine day escaped from her master's house, and, like another Heloïse, followed her Abélard to Kutahieh, where for six months they remained in hiding.

She was then ten years old; her teacher grew daily fonder of the girl, took her to Constantinople and entrusted her to the care of a Greek bishop, enjoining him to make a good Christian of her. He then went to Vienna to obtain the consent of his parents and of his Government to marry his pretty pupil.

Two years passed. The poor girl had received no

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news from her future husband; the bishop was dead, and his heirs turned Marie adrift. Marie was the name given to her at her conversion. Being without help or protection, she constantly ran the risk of being discovered by some relative or some friend of her family, and it is well known that Turks never pardon those who change their religion. She accordingly resolved to take the bold step of going to Vienna to rejoin her benefactor. She set out from Constantinople on foot, and on reaching the Austrian capital, she learned that her future husband had been dead for more than a year.

At this news her grief and despair may well be conceived. What should she do? What was to become of her? Should she return to her family? Yes, that is what she determined to do. She went to Trieste and found the place in dreadful confusion. It had just been garrisoned by the French, but the recent war troubles had not yet subsided. Marie entered a Greek convent for a time, until an opportunity occurred for her to take ship for Constantinople. While here a sub-lieutenant of infantry named Dartois saw her, fell madly in love with her, and married her within a year.

Madame Dartois, happy though she was, could not give up her plan of going home to visit her

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parents. Having become a Frenchwoman, she thought that this would ensure from them a gracious welcome. Her husband's regiment was under orders to leave Trieste, and this gave Madame Dartois another opportunity to entreat her husband to let her go to Constantinople. He consented, yet not before he had pointed out to her all the perils to which by such a journey she would be exposed. Finally, she set out, and a few days after her arrival, as she was endeavouring to trace the whereabouts of her parents, she recognised in the street the Broussa merchant, her former master, who was searching everywhere for her, and had sworn to kill her if he found her.

For three years this terrible meeting served to fill her with such dread that she feared to go out of doors or be seen in the streets, always thinking that she might meet the fierce Anatolian. From time to time she received letters from her husband, who informed her of the movements of the French army and of his promotion. In the last of these letters he begged her to return to France, where he hoped to rejoin her soon.

As all hope of a reconciliation with her parents had vanished, Madame Dartois determined to do as her husband bade her, and though war between

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Russia and Turkey made the high roads far from safe, she started from Constantinople in July, 1809.

Crossing Hungary, and travelling right through the Austrian camps, Madame Dartois was on her way to Vienna when at Gratz she heard the grievous news that her husband had been mortally wounded at the battle of Wagram. He was then at Gratz; she was brought to his bedside, and he died in her arms.

She was overwhelmed with grief at his death, but ere long it behoved her to consider the future. The scanty supply of money which she brought away with her from Constantinople had barely served to pay her travelling expenses. M. Dartois had left her nothing at his death. Then certain folk advised her to go to Schönbrunn, and ask the Emperor for help. One of the commanding officers gave her a letter of recommendation to M. Jaubert, His Majesty's secretary and interpreter.

Madame Dartois arrived just as the Emperor was preparing to leave Schönbrunn. She applied to the Duke de Bassano, General Lebrun, and several other persons who showed deep interest in her misfortunes. Hearing from the Duke de Bassano of her deplorable condition, the Emperor at once issued a special order in favour of Madame Dartois,

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granting her an annual pension of 1,600 francs, the first year to be paid in advance. When the Duke de Bassano came to tell her what His Majesty had done, and handed her the first year's money, she knelt down at his feet and burst into tears.

The Emperor's *fête* day was celebrated at Vienna in brilliant fashion. All the inhabitants felt bound to illuminate their windows, and thus the general effect produced was most extraordinary. In every pane lamps and candles were artistically arranged, the whole producing a charming effect. The Austrians seemed as gay as did our soldiers, and they would not have given their own Emperor such a merry reception. Perhaps some of the gaiety was a trifle forced, yet no sign of this was anywhere apparent.

The day before the *fête*, while the troops were on parade, a fearful explosion was heard. Seemingly, it had occurred in Vienna. A few moments later a gendarme came galloping up as hard as he could. "Hullo!" cried General Mechnem, laughing, "Vienna must be on fire; whoever saw a gendarme gallop before?" The fellow brought news of a most deplorable catastrophe. A detachment of artillery were preparing various fireworks

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in the arsenal in honour of His Majesty. One of them, while handling a shell, lighted the fuse, and then, panic-stricken, flung it from him. It set fire to the store of gunpowder, and as a result of the explosion, eighteen gunners were killed on the spot, while seven were wounded.

It was at this time that I encountered M. Charles Sulmetter, chief commissioner of the Vienna police. I had seen him several times before. He had begun his career as the Emperor's head spy, and his employment proved so profitable to him that he was able to amass a fortune of forty thousand pounds. He was born at Strasburg, and at first figured as chief of a band of smugglers in Alsace.

The secretary of General Andréossy, Governor of Vienna, had an unfortunate passion for gambling, and, being deeply in debt, he sold himself to the enemy. His papers were seized, he confessed his traitorous conduct and was sentenced to death. At the moment of execution he showed astounding coolness. "Come closer," he cried to the soldiers who were about to shoot him, "come closer, and then you will be more likely to hit me, and I shall suffer less."

In one of his excursions round about Vienna

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the Emperor met a recruit, a mere lad, who was going to rejoin his regiment. He stopped him and enquired his name, his age, his regiment and his country. "Sir," replied the soldier, "my name is Martin; I am seventeen years old, and I come from the Hautes Pyrénées."

"So you're a Frenchman, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, you're a rogue of a Frenchman, are you? Disarm this man and let him be hanged."

"Yes, damn you," cried the recruit, "I *am* a Frenchman, and long live the Emperor!"

His Majesty laughed loudly. The lad was told of the joke and ran off to join his comrades, and the Emperor promised to reward him, which soon afterwards he did.

Two or three days before his departure from Schönbrunn the Emperor again ran the risk of assassination. This time the delinquent was a woman.

The Countess —— just then was attracting universal attention, as much on account of her marvellous beauty as for her scandalous intrigue with "Lord Paget," the British Ambassador. It would be difficult to find expressions that should rightly describe all the grace and charm of this lady whom

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Vienna society received with a certain repugnance. Yet she made amends for such disdain by entertaining all the most brilliant officers in the French army. An army contractor took it into his head that he would get the Emperor to make the lady's acquaintance, and, without His Majesty's knowledge, made proposals to the Countess through one of his friends, a cavalry officer attached to the military police of Vienna.

The cavalry officer thought he was speaking in the Emperor's name, and in perfect good faith told the Countess that His Majesty was most anxious to see her at Schönbrunn. It was one morning that he made an appointment for the same evening. This seemed just a little too precipitate for the Countess, who would not decide at once, but said she must have a day to think it over, adding that she required undeniable proofs that the Emperor really wanted to see her. The officer declared this to be so, and promised to furnish all the requisite proofs. After reporting matters to the contractor, the latter gave orders for a carriage to be got ready that evening. The officer returned to the Countess, but she said she was still undecided. Would he come back to-morrow at the same hour? He did so. This time the Countess seemed quite ready to start. She re-

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ceived him merrily, even eagerly, and after gazing steadily in his face said, "You can come back in an hour, I shall be ready. I will go and see him; be sure of that. Yesterday I had business which had to be done, but to-day I am quite free. If you are a good Austrian you must prove it to me. You know how great is the harm that he has done to our country! So come back and fetch me; don't forget!" The cavalry officer, terrified at such a confession, went straight back to the castle and told all. The Emperor handsomely rewarded him, and, in his own interests, persuaded him not to see the Countess again, adding that the whole affair was to be hushed up.

Such dangers as these made no impression whatever upon the Emperor. He was wont to say, "What have I to fear? I can never be assassinated. I shall only die on the battlefield." And even on the battlefield he made no attempt to avoid peril. At Essling, for instance, he exposed himself to the firing as if he were some valiant subaltern ambitious of a colonelcy. Shells killed men to left and to right of him, yet he did not budge an inch. At last, in alarm, a general exclaimed, "Sire, if Your Majesty does not move, I shall be compelled to have you

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carried off by my grenadiers." From this one may judge how little the Emperor cared to shield himself. But signs of hostility on the part of the Viennese made him anxious about the safety of the troops, and orders were issued forbidding the men to leave barracks after sunset. The Emperor feared that the townsfolk might do them harm.

The Château of Schönbrunn was the rallying point of all the most distinguished *savants* that Germany could boast. No new work appeared, no famous invention was brought out, but the Emperor desired to make the author's acquaintance. Thus it was that M. Maëlzel, the famous mechanician and the inventor of the metronome, had the honour of presenting the Empress with several of his inventions. The Emperor admired the artificial legs, intended to be a far more comfortable substitute for those made of wood. His Majesty commissioned M. Maëlzel to construct an ambulance waggon to remove the wounded from the battlefield. M. Maëlzel also made a wonderful automaton, known throughout Europe as the chess-player. He brought this to Schönbrunn to show the Emperor, and it was placed in the apartments of the Prince de Neufchâtel. The Emperor visited the Prince, and I, with others, accompanied him on

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that occasion. The automaton was seated before a chess-board, and the Emperor, taking a chair opposite the figure, said laughingly, "Now then, my friend, we'll have a game." The automaton, bowing, made signs for the Emperor to begin. After two or three moves, the Emperor made a wrong one on purpose. The automaton bowed, and replaced the piece upon the board. His Majesty cheated again, when the automaton bowed again, but this time took the pawn. "Quite right," said His Majesty, as he promptly cheated for the third time. The automaton then shook its head and, with one sweep of its hand, knocked all the chessmen down.

The Emperor highly complimented the inventor of this extraordinary piece of mechanism. When leaving the room, accompanied by the Prince de Neufchâtel, he met two little girls in the ante-chamber who had brought a basket of beautiful fruit for the Prince from their mother. As the Prince greeted them familiarly, the Emperor, being desirous of making their acquaintance, accosted them also, and proceeded to question them; but they did not understand French. Someone then told His Majesty that these two pretty girls were the daughters of a woman whose life Marshal Berthier had saved in

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1805. He was riding once alone in winter-time; it was bitterly cold, and snow lay thick upon the ground. Suddenly at the foot of a tree he saw a woman prostrate and seemingly in a dying condition. She was half-frozen. The Marshal took her in his arms, placed her on his horse, wrapped her in his cloak, and thus brought her home to her daughters, who were grieving at her absence. He rode off without disclosing his name, but at the taking of Vienna they met him again, and every week the two sisters came to see their benefactor and brought him flowers or fruit in token of their life-long gratitude.

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CHAPTER XVI

Excursion to Raab—The Bishop and Soliman—Madame Aquet—Strange story of a female brigand—The Archduke Charles's hunting party—Departure from Schönbrunn—Arrival at Passau—The German doctor's widow—Panic at Augsburg—Kindness of General Lecourbe—The humane grenadier—The Emperor's rapid journey—Arrival at Fontainebleau—The Emperor in a bad humour—His liking for Lyons goods—His harsh reception of the Empress—Josephine in tears—The Emperor makes it up.

TOWARDS the close of September the Emperor went to Raab, and was about to ride back to Schönbrunn when he perceived the Bishop of Raab within a short distance of him.

"Isn't it the Bishop?" he asked M. Jardin, who was holding the horse's head.

"No, Sire, it's Soliman," was the reply.

"I ask you if it is not the Bishop," repeated His Majesty, pointing to the prelate.

With all his thoughts set upon the stable, and knowing the Emperor had a favourite horse called "The Bishop," M. Jardin solemnly reiterated:

"No, Sire, I assure you that he was out yesterday, or the day before."

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Then the Emperor saw the mistake, and burst out laughing.

At Wagram I can bear witness to an act which may serve as a proof of the Emperor's great kindness of heart. I have cited several; and if in this particular instance he was obliged to refuse to perform an act of clemency, his very refusal serves to exhibit the generosity and the force of his character.

Madame de Combray, a wealthy lady living near Caen, gave up her château to a band of Royalists, who considered that they did good service to their cause by robbing mail coaches on the public highway. She became treasurer to this gang, and handed her gains to a spurious agent of Louis XVIII. Madame Aquet, the lady's daughter, formed one of the band, and, dressed as a man, distinguished herself by her audacity. But their exploits were not of long duration. Outnumbered and brought to bay, they had to surrender to the officers of justice. They were tried, and Madame Aquet, with her accomplices, was sentenced to death. She pretended that she was pregnant, in order to obtain a reprieve, during which time she made every endeavour to secure a free pardon. But her efforts proved fruitless, and after eight

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months of vain petitioning, she resolved to send her children to Germany to implore the Emperor's pardon. Her sister, her two daughters, and a doctor reached Schönbrunn the day that the Emperor went to visit the battlefield of Wagram. All day long they waited at the palace gates for the Emperor's return. The two little girls, aged respectively ten and twelve years, aroused deep interest, but their mother's crime was a hideous one and merited condign punishment. The children, dressed in mourning, flung themselves at the Emperor's feet, exclaiming, "Mercy! mercy! Give us back our mother!" The Emperor kindly raised them up, took the petition and read it carefully through, glanced at the children, hesitated, and then, just as all who witnessed this touching scene expected to hear him pardon the condemned woman, he walked swiftly away, saying, "I cannot! I cannot!" I saw what a struggle it was for him; he changed colour several times, his voice grew husky and tears were in his eyes. To me his refusal seemed positively a courageous act.

Among my notes I find the following mournful incident, which may fittingly be placed beside the foregoing. The wife of an infantry colonel would never leave her husband. When the army was on

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the march she followed the regiment in a *calèche*, and during a battle she remained on horseback as close to the lines as she possibly could. At Friedland she saw the colonel fall, struck by a bullet. She ran to his aid, accompanied by a servant, and herself carried him from the battlefield to the ambulance. Yet her efforts proved vain, for he was dead. She uttered no cry, she shed no tear, but handed her purse to the surgeon and begged him to embalm her husband's body. The operation was performed as promptly and efficiently as possible. The corpse was then put in a box and placed in a travelling-carriage. The despairing widow then sat beside her grim charge and at once drove homewards to France. So intense was her grief, however, that it soon unhinged her reason. At every stopping-place she shut herself up with her precious burden, drew the body out of its box, placed it on the bed, uncovered its face, overwhelmed it with caresses, spoke to it as if it were alive, and lay down beside it to sleep. In the morning she replaced the corpse in its coffin, resumed her mood of silent dejection, and travelled on. For some days the secret was not discovered, but shortly before reaching Paris it leaked out. The body had been badly embalmed, and putrefaction set in. At an hostelry where she

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stopped the sickening odour emanating from the chest aroused suspicion. They broke open her room, and found her hugging her husband's putrid head. "Silence!" she cried, "my husband is asleep. Why have you come to disturb his dreams of glory?" It was with difficulty that they could wrest the corpse from its insane keeper. Soon after this she died in Paris raving mad.

Much astonishment was caused at Schönbrunn by the non-appearance of the Archduke Charles, for whom it was known that the Emperor had great esteem. However, two or three days before the Court left for Munich His Majesty went out hunting with a small suite, I being of the party. At a place on the Vienna high road called La Venerie we stopped, and here the Archduke Charles with one or two of his suite received His Majesty. They remained for a long while closeted together in the summer-house, and it was very late before we got back to Schönbrunn.

The Emperor left this last-named residence at noon on the 16th of October. We reached Passau on the morning of the 18th. The Emperor spent the whole day in visiting the Maximilian and Napoleon forts, as well as seven or eight redoubts named after the principal events of the

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campaign. More than twelve thousand workmen were employed on these important constructions. The visit of His Majesty gave all these good fellows a holiday. That evening we continued our journey, and two days later reached Munich.

At Augsburg, on leaving the residence of the Elector of Trèves, the Emperor encountered a woman with her four children kneeling beside the roadway. He kindly bade her rise, and asked what he could do for her. The poor woman, without answering, presented a petition in German, which General Rapp translated. It seems she was the widow of a German doctor, named Buiting, who had lately died, and who had shown great zeal in attending to wounded French soldiers when he had a chance to do so. His Majesty at once granted her a pension, and the poor woman on learning the good news fainted.

I also witnessed an equally touching scene. When the Emperor was marching on Vienna, the inhabitants of Augsburg, who had ill-treated some of the Bavarians, were in great fear lest the Emperor should punish them for this with terrible severity, and they were panic-struck on hearing that a part of the French army was to pass through the town.

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A young and remarkably beautiful woman, who had only lately become a widow, had withdrawn to Augsburg, hoping to be quieter there than elsewhere. Terrified at the approach of the troops, she caught up her child in her arms, and fled. But instead of avoiding our soldiers, she went out by the wrong gateway, and found herself in the midst of the French outposts. General Lecourbe, noticing her agitation and distress, gave her a passport and an escort for a neighbouring town, where some of her relatives lived. The order to advance was given simultaneously, and in the confusion the mother was separated from her son. She went off under escort, while the child remained with the soldiers. A kind-hearted grenadier took charge of it, and, finding out where the mother had gone, he determined to restore her boy to her safe and sound, if his life were spared. He made a leathern wallet in which to carry his tiny charge, and during an engagement the good fellow dug a hole in the ground and placed the child in it. When the fighting ceased, he fetched it away again. At first his comrades jeered at him, but they soon saw what a good-hearted fellow he was. The child escaped all dangers, and when the army was marching back to Munich, the

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grenadier, who had grown strangely fond of his helpless little comrade, felt almost sorry as the time drew near for him to give it back to its mother.

Her feelings at the loss of her child may well be imagined. She begged and entreated the soldiers escorting her to turn back. But they had received their orders, and nothing could induce them to refrain from carrying these out. Hardly had she reached her destination, than she returned to Augsburg, and made enquiries everywhere, but without success.

She thought that her little son must be dead, and bitterly bewailed his loss. Six months later, when the troops were passing through Augsburg, someone came to tell her that a soldier wished to see her, and had something precious to give her. As he could not leave his regiment, he begged her to come and see him at his quarters. She did so, and he at once placed the little fellow in her arms. She could hardly believe her eyes. The good-natured grenadier, thinking that she might possibly be in straitened circumstances, had made a subscription for her amounting to twenty-five louis. This sum he had placed in one of the pockets of the child's frock.

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The Emperor only stayed a very short time at Augsburg. The day he arrived a courier was sent on in advance by the Grand Marshal, M. de Luçay, to say that His Majesty would probably reach Fontainebleau on the evening of October 27th. But instead of this, the Emperor travelled at such a rate that on the 26th at ten o'clock in the morning he alighted at the gate of Fontainebleau, and instead of the Court being there to receive him as instructed, there was only the Grand Marshal, the courier, and the *concierge*. This unfortunate occurrence (a most natural one, after all, as one could not foresee that His Majesty would be a day before his time) greatly vexed the Emperor, and he kept looking about him for someone to scold. Then, seeing the courier about to dismount, he said, "You can have a rest to-morrow; just hurry on to Saint-Cloud and announce my arrival." So the poor fellow had to gallop off.

For the cause of His Majesty's extreme annoyance no one was really to blame. In accordance with his instructions, M. de Luçay had not ordered the Imperial suite to be in readiness until the following morning, so that it could not have reached Fontainebleau until the evening. There was nothing for it but to wait.

Meanwhile the Emperor inspected the newly-

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constructed apartments, and after a long tour through the rooms His Majesty sat down, showing signs of great impatience. He kept asking the time every minute, or else glanced at his watch. Finally he told me to get writing materials, and he sat down at a little table, no doubt cursing inwardly because his private secretaries had not arrived.

At five o'clock a carriage drove up; it came from Saint-Cloud. Hearing the sound of wheels in the courtyard, the Emperor ran downstairs in a great hurry, and while a footman was opening the door and laying down the carpet His Majesty sharply enquired, "Where is the Empress?" The new-comers replied that Her Majesty was just behind them and would arrive in a quarter of an hour at the latest. "Lucky for her!" rejoined the Emperor, turning abruptly on his heel. Then he went upstairs again to the little library and continued his work.

At last the Empress arrived, just as it was striking six, it being quite dark by that time. The Emperor did not come down to meet her, but went on with his writing. It was the first time that he had ever acted thus. The Empress found him seated in the library. "Ah, madame, there you are!" said he; "it's just as well that you have come, as I was going to start for Saint-Cloud." And after

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one glance at her, he looked down and went on writing as before. At this harsh reception Josephine was much hurt. She sought to make some excuse, but the Emperor cut her short in a way that brought tears to her eyes. Soon afterwards, however, he was sorry for what he had done, asked her pardon, and admitted that he had been in the wrong.

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CHAPTER XVII

Erroneous opinion as to the divorce—The Emperor's motives—Painful sacrifice—The Empress resigned—The Emperor's gaiety—The King of Saxony at Fontainebleau—Friendship of the two monarchs—The King's compliment—The Emperor preoccupied—Beginning of the estrangement—Melancholy time at Fontainebleau—November 30th—A terrible scene—The Empress faints—Festivities in Paris—Immense enthusiasm—Arrival of Prince Eugene—His interview with the Emperor—Touching speech of the Emperor's—Ceremony of the divorce—Josephine's nocturnal visit—She leaves for La Malmaison.

IT was not, as some Memoirs state, in consequence of the foregoing little tiff that the Emperor first thought of obtaining a divorce. He believed that for the welfare of France it behoved him to have a son and heir; and as it was certain that the Empress could now never give him one, he felt constrained to contemplate a divorce. Yet it was by the gentlest methods and with the utmost persuasion that he sought to bring Josephine to submit to so bitter a sacrifice. He did not resort to angry threats, as some have striven to suggest. He appealed to his wife's good sense, and she gave

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her voluntary consent. I repeat that there was no violence on the part of the Emperor; on the Empress's part there was courage, resignation, submission. Her devotion to the Emperor would have made her accept any and every sacrifice; she would have given her life for his; and although this terrible separation broke her heart, she felt comforted by the thought that she had spared him anxiety, had saved the man she loved best on earth from torment. Indeed, when she heard of the birth of the King of Rome, she forgot all her grief, and only thought of the joy of her old friend, for both Napoleon and Josephine ever showed towards each other all the tender consideration that marks consummate friendship.

The Emperor had had nothing all day (on the 26th) except a cup of chocolate and a little soup, and I often heard him complain of feeling hungry before the arrival of the Empress. After their little quarrel was over, they embraced each other, and the Empress went into her apartments to change her dress. Meanwhile the Emperor received MM. Decrès and Montalivet, who had been summoned by special messenger. At half-past seven the Empress re-appeared, dressed to perfection. In spite of the cold, her hair had been elaborately

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ornamented with cornflowers and silver wheat-ears; and she wore a white satin polonaise trimmed with swansdown, which suited her admirably. The Emperor paused in his work to look at her. "I have not been long dressing, have I?" she smilingly enquired. Without answering, the Emperor pointed to the clock; then he rose, gave her his hand, and passed on to the dining-room, saying to his ministers, "I shall be with you in five minutes." "But these gentlemen have not dined," said the Empress; "they have only just come from Paris."

"True," replied the Emperor, so MM. Montalivet and Decrès joined Their Majesties at table, where they hardly got anything to eat, for the Emperor had scarcely sat down, when he flung aside his napkin, and went back to his work in the adjoining room. Necessarily they had to go too, much to their regret, as I imagine.

The day ended better than it had begun. There was a small but pleasant reception in the evening, at which the Emperor seemed in the very best of spirits. It was as if he wished to efface the recollection of his little squabble with the Empress.

Their Majesties remained at Fontainebleau until the 14th of November. The evening before, the King of Saxony arrived in Paris. The Emperor, who rode

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nearly all the way from Fontainebleau to the capital, at once called at the Elysées. The two monarchs seemed on intimate terms, and went out almost every day together. One morning very early, they took a walk in the Tuileries; I was in attendance upon the Emperor. They went in the direction of the Jena bridge, then in course of construction. The Emperor criticised the works, and sent for the architect, to whom he pointed out certain defects, which the latter admitted, and promised to remedy. Then, turning to the King of Saxony, His Majesty said, "You see, cousin, the master's eye is needed everywhere."

"Yes," replied the King, "and above all, such a practised eye as Your Majesty's."

Almost immediately after our return to Fontainebleau I noticed that the Emperor, when with his august consort, seemed moody and constrained. The Empress appeared equally embarrassed. Soon everyone remarked this; and thus the stay at Fontainebleau proved extremely dismal and boring. In Paris some diversion was caused by the presence of the King of Saxony, but the Empress seemed to be more uneasy than ever. Each of us indulged in countless conjectures; as for myself, I knew but too well what to think. The Emperor's brow each

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day became more careworn, until the 30th of November arrived. On that day dinner passed off in greater silence than ever. The Empress had been weeping all day long and, to hide as much as possible her pale cheeks and red eyes, she had put on a large white hat tied under her chin; the brim quite concealed her face. The Emperor scarcely looked up once; if he did, it was but to glance furtively at the Empress with a profound look of sorrow in his eyes.

Motionless as statues, the attendants stood watching with curiosity and uneasiness this gloomy, painful scene. The whole meal was a mere matter of form, for their Majesties touched nothing, and all that could be heard was the monotonous clatter of plates being handed or removed, or the occasional tapping of the Emperor's knife against his glass. Only once the Emperor broke the silence by a deep sigh and the question, "What is the weather like?" It was addressed to one of his suite, but he scarcely seemed to hear or to expect a reply. Almost immediately afterwards he got up and left the table, slowly followed by the Empress, who held a handkerchief to her lips to repress her sobs. Coffee was served, and as usual a page handed the tray to the Empress, who herself always poured

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out the liqueur. But the Emperor helped himself to this as also to coffee, while steadily watching the Empress, who stood there in a sort of stupor. After giving back his cup to the page, he made signs that he wished to be left alone, and closed the door of the apartment. I sat down immediately outside it, and soon no one was left in the dining-room but one of the prefects of the palace, who, with arms folded, walked up and down, anticipating, just as I did, some dire catastrophe. In a few moments, hearing cries, I rushed forward. The Emperor hastily opened the door and looked about. He only saw us two. The Empress was on the floor, sobbing as if her heart would break. "No, no, you won't do it; you don't want to kill me!" she cried. His Majesty told my companion to come in, and the door was shut again. I afterwards heard that the Emperor told him to lift the Empress up and carry her to her room. His Majesty said she was suffering from a violent attack of hysterics, and required prompt attention. Helped by the Emperor, Monsieur de B. carried the Empress in his arms, while His Majesty took a candle from the mantelpiece and showed the way along the passage leading to the little staircase which connected the Emperor's apartments with those of the

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Empress. This staircase was so extremely narrow that one person unaided could not possibly carry such a burden without risking a fall. At the suggestion, therefore, of Monsieur de B., the Emperor called the Keeper of the Portfolio, and made him hold the candle while he caught the Empress by her heels and so transferred her safely to the bedroom. Then he rang for her women, and when they came in he withdrew; tears were in his eyes and he seemed deeply agitated. In fact, such was his emotion, that to Monsieur de B. he let fall sundry phrases which under other circumstances he would surely never have uttered, to the effect that for France's sake and the Imperial dynasty, he had been obliged to ignore the dictates of his heart, and that a divorce had become a deplorable necessity—in fact, a duty.

Queen Hortense and M. Corvisart hastened to the Empress's assistance. She passed a very bad night. Nor was the Emperor able to sleep. He rose several times to enquire personally how Josephine was. Throughout the whole of this night the Emperor did not utter a single word. I had never seen him so deeply distressed.

Meanwhile the King of Naples, the King of Westphalia, the King of Würtemberg, and the

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Queens and Princesses of the Imperial Family arrived in Paris to take part in the municipal rejoicings and festivities to celebrate recent victories, and also the anniversary of the coronation. The session of the Legislative Body was also about to commence. In the interim between the painful episode just described and the signing of the divorce, it behoved the Empress to take part in all these functions and show herself to huge crowds, whereas solitude alone might have served in a measure to lessen her grief. She was obliged to cover her face with rouge to hide her pallor and the disastrous effects of a month of anguish and tears. How excruciating for her! And how she must have loathed the trammels of her exalted position!

On the 3rd of December Their Majesties went to Notre Dame. Here a *Te Deum* was chanted, and then the Imperial *cortége* proceeded to the palace of the Legislative Body, where the session was opened with unusual pomp. The Emperor took his seat amid a scene of indescribable enthusiasm. Never perhaps had his appearance evoked such hearty applause and cheering. For a moment the Empress seemed less sad, and as if she enjoyed this affectionate homage paid to him who ere long would cease to be her husband. But when he began to

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speak she relapsed into her former mood of gloomy thoughtfulness.

It was nearly five o'clock when the Royal procession returned to the Tuileries. The State banquet was fixed for half-past seven, and during the interval there was a diplomatic reception, after which the guests passed on into the Diana Gallery.

At the banquet the Emperor wore his coronation dress and his hat and plumes, which he never once took off. He ate more than usual, in spite of his anxious, uneasy look. He kept turning round every minute, while the Grand Chamberlain perpetually bent forward to receive an order that was never given. The Empress sat opposite, richly attired and ablaze with diamonds, but looking even more dejected than in the morning.

To the right of the Emperor sat the King of Saxony in a white uniform with red facings, richly embroidered with silver, and an immensely long wig. Next to him was the King of Westphalia, Jerome Bonaparte, in a white satin tunic and a belt covered with pearls and diamonds. He wore it very high—almost under his arms. His neck was bare; he had but scanty whiskers and moustache; a splendid lace collar turned down over his shoulders, and a black velvet cap with white feathers, completed this singu-

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larly cool, smart costume. Then came the King of Würtemberg with his prodigious paunch, which obliged him to sit a long way off the table; and the King of Naples in a dress quite extravagantly sumptuous, who merely played with his knife and fork, eating and drinking nothing.

To the right of the Empress was "Madame Mère," the Queen of Westphalia, the Princess Borghese, and Queen Hortense, pale, like the Empress, but looking handsomer by reason of her sadness. Her face formed a marked contrast to that of the Princess Pauline, who never looked merrier than on that occasion. The latter wore a costume of extraordinary splendour, which yet was far from eclipsing the personal attractions and the tasteful, simple toilette of the Queen of Holland.

On the following day there was a splendid *fête* at the Town Hall, when the Empress displayed all her wonted grace and kindly charm. This was the last public function at which she appeared.

A few days after all this jubilation, the Viceroy of Italy, Eugene de Beauharnais, arrived. From the Empress herself he learnt the terrible step which circumstances had made it imperative should be taken. He was stunned by the news: in despair he went to the Emperor, and, as if he could not

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believe what had been told him, asked His Majesty if the divorce was really to take place. The Emperor nodded, and sorrowfully held out his hand.

"Sire, allow me to leave your service."

"What is that?"

"Yes, Sire, the son of her who is no longer Empress cannot remain a Viceroy. I will join my mother in her seclusion, and help to comfort her."

"What? You want to leave me, Eugene? You? Ah! don't you see how imperative are the reasons which force me to take this step? And if I obtain this son for whom I so dearly long, this son whom I so greatly need, who is there to replace me, when I am away? Who is there to be as a father to him, if I die? Who is there to bring him up, and make a man of him?"

Tears filled the Emperor's eyes as he spoke these last words. He again took Prince Eugene by the hand, and affectionately embraced him. I was unable to overhear the remainder of this interesting conversation.

At length the fatal day arrived; it was the 16th of December. The members of the Imperial family had all assembled in full Court dress when the Empress entered, wearing a perfectly plain white

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gown, absolutely devoid of ornament. Pale, but calm, she was leaning upon the arm of Queen Hortense, who was just as pale and far more agitated than her mother. Near the Emperor, with arms folded, stood Prince Eugene, trembling so violently that it seemed as if any moment he would fall. Directly the Empress entered, Count Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angély began to read out the deed of separation.

This was listened to in profound silence, great anxiety being depicted on every countenance. The Empress seemed more composed than anyone else, albeit her cheeks were furrowed by tears. She was seated in an arm-chair in the centre of the room, her elbow resting on a table. Beside her, sobbing, stood Queen Hortense. When the reading of the deed was over, the Empress rose, dried her eyes, and in a voice that was all but firm, pronounced the oath of adherence. Then sitting down, she took the pen handed to her by M. de Saint-Jean d'Angély and signed the document. Hereupon she withdrew, still supported by Queen Hortense. Prince Eugene went out at the same time, but, strength failing him, he fell down in an unconscious condition, when his aides-de-camp speedily came to his assistance.

During this terrible ceremony the Emperor never

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spoke, never moved, but remained like a statue, his eyes set in a vacant, glassy stare. All that day he was taciturn and morose. In the evening, as he was going to bed and I was awaiting final instructions, the door suddenly opened and the Empress came in, with hair dishevelled and woebegone countenance. I was appalled at her appearance. Josephine (she was only Josephine now) tottered towards the Emperor's bed, and, sobbing violently, put her arms round His Majesty's neck, lavishing caresses upon him. My emotion baffles description. The Emperor also began to weep, and, clasping Josephine to his breast, said, "Come, come, Josephine, my dearest, don't give way like this; come, you must be brave, you must be brave! I shall always be your friend." Choked by sobs, the Empress could make no answer, and then ensued a mute scene lasting several minutes, their mutual sobbing being more eloquent than words. Roused at length from such grieving, as if from a dream, the Emperor perceived that I was there, and in a broken voice said, "Constant, leave the room." I obeyed, and withdrew to an adjoining apartment. An hour later I saw Josephine go by, still with sad, tearful countenance. In passing she greeted me with a friendly gesture. Then I went into the Emperor's room to remove

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the lights. He was silent as the grave, and so covered up by the bed-clothes that his face was invisible.

Next morning when I went in, the Emperor never made the slightest allusion to the Empress's visit. He seemed depressed and unwell. At times he heaved a deep sigh, and all the while he was dressing he never uttered a syllable. Then he at once withdrew to his study. It was on this day that Josephine was to leave the Tuileries and go to La Malmaison. All the palace officials who were not on duty assembled in the hall to take a last look at this dethroned Empress. All their hearts followed her to her exile. Each looked at the other, unable to speak. Then Josephine appeared, wearing a thick veil, with one hand resting on the shoulder of a lady-in-waiting, while with the other she held a handkerchief to her eyes. Everyone present was moved to tears as this adorable woman traversed the short distance to her carriage. She got into it without one last look at the palace that she was leaving for ever. The blinds were instantly drawn down and the horses started off at lightning speed. A few hours later the Emperor left for Versailles.

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CHAPTER XVIII

Anecdotes previous to the Emperor's second marriage—Josephine jealous—Madame Gazani and the Emperor—The Emperor and the milliners—Constant always within reach—The Emperor dictates a letter—Constant obtains a special shooting license—The Emperor gives him a gun—His Majesty's favourite guns—His opinion of Louis XVI.—The family portraits—Scene in the Empress's box—Singular use of a shawl—Constant's cousin at Saint-Cloud—Marshal Bessières's injustice—He makes amends for it—A woman's imprudence, and the result.

THE marriage of the Emperor with the Arch-Duchess Marie Louise was the first step in his new career. Napoleon flattered himself that his future would prove as glorious as his past. Yet it was far otherwise. Before narrating the events of the year 1810, I will jot down sundry anecdotes and stories which, if they can hardly be assigned an exact date, were certainly anterior to the epoch with which I have now to deal. The Empress Josephine had long been jealous of the beautiful Madame Gazani, one of her readers, and she treated her with much coldness. The latter complained to

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the Emperor and he spoke to Josephine, requesting her to be kinder to her reader, who was devoted to her mistress. He also told the Empress that she was quite wrong to suppose that any intimacy still existed between himself and Madame Gazani. Though this last assertion failed to convince the Empress, she ceased to be disagreeable towards Madame Gazani. Then one morning the Emperor, fearing that the fair Genoese might still ensnare him, bounced into Josephine's room and said, "I no longer wish to meet Madame Gazani here; she must be sent back to Italy."

This time it was the Empress who took her companion's part, and spoke in her defence. There were rumours already of a divorce; and she replied to Napoleon as follows: "You know very well, my love, that your best way of getting rid of Madame Gazani is to leave her with me. So please let her stay with me. We shall weep together; we both understand each other well."

From that time forward the Empress was extremely kind to Madame Gazani, who accompanied her to La Malmaison and Navarre.

Mention of the Empress Josephine reminds me of two anecdotes, which the Emperor himself delighted to narrate. The amazing extravagance

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in the Empress's household had long been a subject of annoyance to him, and several tradesmen had been forbidden to set foot inside the palace, notably those whom he knew took advantage of the Empress's unsuspecting nature.

One morning, when he unexpectedly entered the Empress's apartment, he found several ladies there who were members of the secret toilette committee, while a notorious milliner was holding forth, and giving them details as to the very latest and most sumptuous fashions. This person was the very one, of all others, whom the Emperor had strictly forbidden to enter the palace, and he little expected to find her there. However, he made no fuss; Josephine alone knew the meaning of his ironical glance, as he withdrew, saying, "Pray go on, ladies; I am sorry to have interrupted you."

Astonished at not being turned out there and then, the milliner beat a hasty retreat. But at the bottom of the stairs she was accosted by a police officer, who, in the politest way, requested her to get into a carriage which was waiting for her in the Cour du Carrousel. It was in vain to protest that she would rather go on foot; the police officer had received precise instructions, and

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caught her by the arm to make matters quite plain. She had to obey, and be driven with this unwelcome companion to Bicêtre prison.

It was subsequently reported to the Emperor that this arrest had made a great scandal in Paris; that he was openly accused of wishing to revive the old days of the Bastille; and that many persons had paid visits of condolence to the prisoner, while there was a long string of carriages outside Bicêtre gaol. The Emperor showed not the slightest concern, but said he was mightily amused about all this fuss about a vendor of gew-gaws. "I will let the silly gossips chatter," said he, "who are so eager to ruin themselves with ribbons. But I mean to teach that old Jewess that I have had her *shut up* because she forgot that I had had her *shut out*."

Another famous haberdasher once excited the Emperor's surprise and anger, by remarks that no person in all France except that individual would have dared to make. The Emperor considered the bill sent in by this man exorbitant, and told me to fetch him, which I did. In ten minutes he appeared. The Emperor was dressing at the time. "Sir," said His Majesty, glancing at the invoice, "your prices are absurd, more

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absurd, if possible, than the silly idiots who imagine that they have need of your wares. You must just make a reasonable reduction, or else I will take care to do so myself." The tradesman then proceeded to justify his charges, and wound up by telling His Majesty that the sum allowed for the Empress's toilette was insufficient, and that many ladies of the middle-class spent a good deal more than that.

At this last piece of impertinence, I must admit that I trembled for the tradesman's shoulders as I anxiously watched the Emperor. To my great surprise, however, he contented himself with crushing the bill in his hand. Then, folding his arms, he advanced two steps towards the audacious fellow, and merely hissed out the single word "Indeed!" This, however, was accompanied by so furious a look, that the tradesman hurriedly retreated, and never waited to get his bill paid.

The Emperor could never bear me to be absent from the palace, and liked to know that I was within reach even when I was off duty and he had no need of my services. I do not know if it was with a view to keep me within call that he repeatedly asked me to do some copying for him. Occasionally, too, he wanted to jot down various notes when in bed or in his bath, and he used to say, "Get

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a pen, Constant, and write to my dictation." But I always declined, and went to fetch M. de Meneval. I have already stated how the Revolution was responsible for my somewhat faulty education. Yet, however well educated I might have been, I doubt if I should ever have ventured to write to the Emperor's dictation. Such a task was certainly no easy one; it needed great practice. He spoke very fast, without pausing once, and grew impatient if asked to repeat a phrase.

In order to keep me always at his disposal, the Emperor gave me permission to shoot in the park of Saint-Cloud. His Majesty had graciously noticed that I was very fond of shooting. I was the only person who received such permission. At the same time the Emperor made me a present of a splendid double-barrelled gun, which had been given to him at Liège, and which is still in my possession. Personally, the Emperor did not care about double-barrelled guns, but preferred smaller ones, which had once belonged to Louis XVI., and which this monarch, who was a skilful gunsmith, had himself ornamented.

The sight of these guns often led the Emperor to speak of Louis XVI., to whom he always alluded in terms of respectful pity. "This unfortunate

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prince," said the Emperor, "was clever, good and wise. At any other epoch he would have been an excellent King, but for a period of revolution he was of no use at all. He was wanting in firmness and in resolution, being unable to resist the folly of his courtiers or the insolence of the Jacobins. The courtiers handed him over to the Jacobins, and these brought him to the scaffold. In his place, I should have mounted my horse and, with sundry concessions on the one part, and sundry strokes of my whip on the other, I would have restored order."

At Saint-Cloud there was a room of which the Emperor was very fond; it looked out on to a chestnut alley, where he could walk up and down at any time without being seen. This apartment was filled with life-size portraits of all the Princesses of the Imperial House, and was called the Family Room.

Besides shooting, my other great pastime at Saint-Cloud was the play. Once at some special performance in the theatre, the Empress Josephine, in the middle of the first act, was seized with an uncontrollable desire to make water. In order to avoid disturbing anyone, she managed to hold out until the act was over, and then hurried into the little room adjoining the Royal box.

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Unfortunately the much-needed utensil could not be found, and a messenger had to be sent to fetch one from the château. At last the Empress could wait no longer. She herself requested the chamberlains to withdraw, and bade her ladies stand round her in a circle, in case of being surprised. Then putting her cashmere shawl on the parquet floor, she used that instead of the missing chamber-pot. The Empress and Queen Hortense were of course both much inclined to laugh; in fact, the incident provoked loud bursts of merriment among the circle of Court ladies. This hilarity had almost subsided, when all at once it broke out anew, and reached such a pitch that the Emperor, who, from his box, heard the giggling, and was afraid it might make the audience notice it, sent an equerry to say "Hush!" The Empress found great difficulty in stifling her laughter, and it was a good half-hour before she was sufficiently composed to re-appear in the box.

The reason for the ladies' second laughing-bout was the following: After the Empress had put her shawl to this singular use, the chamberlains came back into the little room again, and one of them, Monsieur de B., picked up the precious wrap. Finding it in such a pitiably moist state, he did not deem

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it worthy to clothe the shoulders of his august mistress, so he put it, all wet as it was, into his pocket, intending to make a present of it to the Countess, his wife. The ladies-in-waiting were much chagrined at this, as the shawl belonged to them by right.

While at Saint-Cloud I received a visit from a distant cousin of mine, whom I had not seen for years. He was amazed at everything he saw. Yet his enthusiasm did not let him forget the stories afloat in the provinces of the marvellous dexterity of the Paris pickpockets. Once, as he and I were at the Court theatre, when coming out and joining the brilliant and distinguished audience as it left the pit and boxes, he drily remarked, as he gripped his watch-chain and seals, "After all, it's as well to be careful. One does not know whom one may meet in a place like this!"

Marshal Bessières on one occasion presented a petition to His Majesty for the promotion of a colonel, adding a very strong personal recommendation of his own. One morning the Marshal entered the Emperor's private room, and, seeing his petition lying on the bureau, thought that there could be no harm in taking it away. Accordingly he did so unperceived. A few hours afterwards the Emperor wished to have another look at this petition. He

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was sure that he had left it in his room, but it was not to be found. The footman must have allowed someone access to the room without His Majesty's permission. Search was made everywhere, but without success, and the Emperor then flew into a fearful passion—one of those fits of rage which, happily at rare intervals, threw the whole palace into confusion. The poor footman was summarily dismissed. At last Marshal Bessières, when he heard of all this trouble, came forward and confessed that he was to blame. Then the Emperor calmed down, the footman was reinstated, and all was forgotten.

The Emperor could not bear anybody to have access to his apartments or to those of the Empress without his sanction. This was the one unpardonable sin for any of his servants to commit. The wife of one of the Swiss Guards once let her lover come into the Empress's apartments. Helped by his silly paramour, the wretch managed to get a wax impression of the lock of Her Majesty's jewel-case, the one that had belonged to Marie Antoinette, and with a false key succeeded in stealing a quantity of jewellery. But the police soon caught him, and he was punished as he deserved. Yet someone else who certainly did not deserve it was punished as well. The poor husband was dismissed.

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CHAPTER XIX

The Emperor's second marriage—Divers conjectures—The Emperor's wardrobe—He receives a portrait of Marie Louise—The Emperor as a waltzer—Amusing scene—The Prince de Neufchâtel goes to Vienna—Formation of the Empress's household—The Empress's wedding presents—The Emperor's gaiety—The lucky slipper—The Emperor's opinion of Queen Caroline of Naples—Marie Louise and Caroline—The Emperor's love-letters—Severity of the Duke of Vicenza—His Majesty's impatience—His generous acts—He is particular about his dress—He welcomes his bride—Her charming manners.

EVER since his divorce the Emperor seemed greatly preoccupied. It was known that he thought of marrying again, and at the palace all the Royal servants discussed this future marriage. But all our conjectures as to the bride were erroneous. Some spoke of a Russian Princess; others declared that the Emperor would only wed a Frenchwoman; nobody ever thought of an Austrian Archduchess. When the marriage had been arranged, the Court could only talk of the youth, grace, and good-nature of the new Empress. The Emperor seemed very merry, and paid more attention to his dress than

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before. He told me to replenish his wardrobe, and bade me see to it that his clothes were of smarter, more fashionable cut. He sat for his portrait, which was brought to Marie Louise by the Prince of Neufchâtel. The Emperor at the same time received that of his youthful bride, and seemed to be charmed with it.

To gratify Marie Louise, the Emperor went to more expense than he had done for any woman. One day when the Emperor was alone with Queen Hortense and Princess Stephanie, the latter mockingly asked him if he knew how to waltz. His Majesty replied that he had never managed to get beyond the first lesson, and that after two or three turns he had got so giddy that he was obliged to stop.

"When I was at the Military School," added the Emperor, "I tried to overcome this giddiness, but I never succeeded. Our dancing-master advised us to waltz with a chair, imagining this to be our partner. I always tumbled down with the chair and broke it in my amorous embrace. The chairs in my own room, as well as others belonging to my comrades, were all smashed in the same way." This story, told with great humour by His Majesty, sent the two Princesses into convulsions of laughter.

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When their merriment had somewhat subsided, the Princess Stephanie returned to the charge and said, "Really, it is most unfortunate that Your Majesty does not waltz. German ladies are mad about waltzing, and no doubt the Empress-elect shares the taste of her compatriots. She can have no other partner but the Emperor; and thus, if she is deprived of a great pleasure, it will be Your Majesty's fault."

"You are right," replied the Emperor. "Well, give me a lesson. You shall have a specimen of my skill." So saying, he got up and danced a step or two with Princess Stephanie, himself humming the Queen of Prussia's tune. But he could only accomplish a couple of turns or so, and that so awkwardly, that the ladies' laughter recommenced. The Princess of Baden stopped him, saying: "You have shown me quite enough, Sire, to convince me that you will never be anything but a bad scholar. You are made to give lessons, not to receive them."

Early in March the Prince de Neufchâtel left for Vienna officially to demand the Archduchess's hand in marriage. The Archduke Charles married her in the Emperor's name, and the new Empress Marie Louise set out for France without delay. The little town of Braunau on the Austro-Bavarian

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frontier had been chosen as the place where the members of her suite were to join her. At the outset it included the following:

Prince Aldobrandini Borghese, head equerry, in place of General Ordener appointed governor of the château de Compiègne.

Count de Beauharnais, gentleman-in-waiting.

Madame de Montebello and Madame de Luçay, ladies-in-waiting.

The Duchesses of Bassano and Rovigo, the Countesses de Montmorency, de Mortemart, de Talhouet, de Lauriston, Duchâtel, de Bouillé, de Montalivet, de Perron, de Lascaris, de Noailles, de Brignolles, de Gentile, and de Canizy (afterwards Duchess of Vicenza). Most of these ladies had formerly been in the service of the Empress Josephine.

The Emperor wished to satisfy himself personally that each article of the trousseau and all the wedding presents were worthy of the bride and of himself. All the dresses and underlinen were brought to the Tuileries, exhibited to him, and packed in his presence. They were as tasteful and elegant as they were costly, the Paris *modistes* working from Viennese patterns. When these patterns were submitted to His Majesty, he took up one of the shoes, which was remarkably small,

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and, slapping my face with it in a sort of caressing way, he observed, "There, Constant, there's a shoe to bring one luck! Have you seen many feet as small as that? Why, you could hold it in your hand!"

The Queen of Naples had been sent to Braunau to receive the new Empress. Queen Caroline, so the Emperor said, was the man among her sisters, just as Prince Joseph was the woman among his brothers. But she was mistaken as to Marie Louise's timidity, which she took for weakness, and thought that she had but to speak and her young sister-in-law would hasten to obey. On reaching Braunau, when the members of the new suite formally assumed office, the Empress dismissed all her Austrian household, with the exception of her mistress of the robes, Madame de Lajanski, who had educated her, and from whom she had never been separated. Etiquette, however, required the present suite of the Empress to be entirely French; indeed, the Emperor's instructions with regard to this matter were most precise. I do not know if, as rumour stated, the Empress had obtained His Majesty's express permission to retain Madame de Lajanski for a year. At any rate, the Queen of Naples thought it

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expedient to remove this lady, fearing the result of her influence upon the Empress. So she applied to the Emperor for positive instructions, and Madame de Lajanski was accordingly sent back from Munich to Vienna. The Empress forbore to complain; but, knowing whose hand had dealt this blow, she ever afterwards bore the Queen of Naples a violent grudge.

The Empress travelled by easy stages, and festivities awaited her in every town along the route. The Emperor sent her an autograph letter every day, to which she regularly replied. Her first letters were very short, and probably somewhat cold, for the Emperor never made any remark about them. But by degrees they became longer and more cordial, so that the Emperor read them with evident pleasure. He used to await the arrival of these missives with all the impatience of a boyish lover, always complaining that the couriers did not travel fast enough, though they all but drove their horses to death.

One day the Emperor came back from shooting with a brace of pheasants that he himself had killed. He was followed by two servants carrying a bouquét of the choicest hot-house flowers from Saint-Cloud. He wrote a note, and sent for his head page and

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said to him, "In ten minutes be ready to get into a carriage. You will find these things there, which you are personally to deliver to Her Majesty the Empress, together with this letter. Whatever you do, don't spare the horses; go as hard as you like, and don't be afraid of consequences. The Duke of Vicenza shan't say anything to you."

The lad was only too ready to obey His Majesty, and, backed up by this promise, he drove off at breakneck speed, never sparing an extra tip or two to the postillions, so that in twenty-four hours he got to Strasburg and delivered his message. I do not know if, on his return, he was scolded by the equerry-in-chief. But had there been cause for scolding, he would have escaped, as the Emperor had assured him that he had nothing to fear on that score. The Duke of Vicenza was admirably fitted for his post, and managed everything in the Royal stables in the most perfect fashion. Nothing could be done without his permission; he had absolute control. Even the Emperor himself could hardly alter any decision that the Duke had once made. For instance, one day His Majesty was travelling to Fontainebleau, and was anxious to get there as quickly as possible. So he told the orderly who controlled the line of carriages to go faster. The latter com-

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municated this order to the Duke of Vicenza, whose carriage preceded the Emperor's. The Duke paid no attention, so the Emperor began to swear, and called out to the orderly, "Let my carriage take the lead, as that in front won't move." The escort and postillions were about to execute this manœuvre, when the Duke of Vicenza, putting his head out of the carriage window, shouted out, "Trot, I tell you! Keep at a trot, d——n you! I'll sack the first fellow that gallops!" The post-boys knew very well that he would keep his word, so they dared not take the lead; and thus the Duke's carriage headed the procession as before. On reaching Fontainebleau, the Emperor asked the Duke the meaning of his conduct. "Sire," replied the latter, "when you don't cut down my stud expenses quite so fine as at present, you shall drive as many horses to death as you like!"

The Emperor was for ever cursing all the ceremonies and festivities which served to delay the arrival of his youthful bride. At Soissons a camp had been formed to receive the Empress. The Emperor was at Compiègne issuing proclamations which set prisoners at liberty, absolved debtors, and others, and on hearing that the Empress was within a few leagues of Soissons he could hardly

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restrain his impatience. He called out to me with all his might, "Ho! there, Constant! Order a carriage, without livery, and come and dress me." The Emperor wanted to surprise the Empress and introduce himself to her unannounced; he laughed like a child at the thought of so droll an interview. He was particularly careful to dress himself very smartly, and with a touch of coquetry chose to put on the famous grey overcoat which he had worn at Wagram.

Thus equipped, His Majesty got into the carriage with the King of Naples. At Courcelles they met the latest courier, who was only a few minutes in advance of the Empress. It was raining in torrents and His Majesty took shelter in the church porch. When the Empress's carriage passed by, he motioned the postillions to stop. The orderly next to the Empress's carriage, recognising the Emperor, hastened to let down the step and announce His Majesty, who was somewhat vexed at this and said, "Didn't you see me make a sign to you to hold your tongue?" However, this little annoyance was over in a moment. The Emperor flung his arms round his bride's neck. She held his portrait in her hand, and glancing first at that and then at the Emperor, said with a charming smile, "Your portrait does not flatter you."

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At Soissons a splendid supper had been prepared for the Empress and her suite, but the Emperor gave orders to drive straight on to Compiègne regardless of the famished courtiers.

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CHAPTER XX

Their Majesties reach Compiègne—The Emperor's jealousy—His nocturnal visit to the Empress—His opinion of German brides—The Emperor as a devout lover—Description of Marie Louise—The two Empresses—A Parallel—Which wife Napoleon preferred—Marie Louise economical and devoid of taste—Her way with servants—My experiences on returning from Russia—The Empress's haughty manner—The lady detectives—The Emperor's vigilance as to the Empress—Strict regulations with regard to visitors—Leroy, the haberdasher—A false rumour.

WHEN Their Majesties reached Compiègne, the Emperor himself gave his hand to the Empress and escorted her to her apartment. He did not wish anyone to be before him in approaching and touching his young bride, and so jealous was he on this point, that he himself forbade M. de Beauharnais, the Empress's lord-in-waiting, to take her hand, albeit this was one of the privileges of his office. According to the official programme, the Emperor ought to have quitted his bride and slept at the Chancellerie. But he did nothing of the kind. After a long conversation with the Empress, he went back to his room, undressed, scented himself with eau-de-

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cologne, and then, wearing only a dressing-gown, he privately returned to the Empress's apartment.

Next morning, when dressing, the Emperor asked me if I had noticed how he had upset the programme arrangements. At the risk of an untruth, I said that I had not. Just then one of the Emperor's intimate friends, a bachelor, came in. His Majesty caught hold of his ear, and cried: "You ought to marry a German girl, my boy! They are the best women in the world, sweet-tempered, kind, simple, and as fresh as roses!" From his satisfied air it was easy to see that His Majesty was painting a portrait from life, and that the artist had not long left his model. After carefully completing his toilette the Emperor went back to the Empress, and at midday ordered lunch for both to be served in Her Majesty's bed-chamber by the ladies-in-waiting. All day long he was in great spirits. Contrary to custom, he dressed for dinner, and wore a coat made by the King of Naples' tailor; but next morning he declared that it was most uncomfortable, and that he never meant to put it on again.

From the foregoing details it will be seen that the Emperor was really in love with his bride. He showed her continual attention; indeed, his conduct was that of a deeply-smitten lover. Nevertheless it

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is not true, as it has been said, that for nearly three months he did no work, to the profound astonishment of all his ministers. For the Emperor, work was an absolute necessity as well as a pleasure, besides being a duty from which no other distractions could ever turn him. Here, as on all similar occasions, he perfectly knew how to combine the duties of State with his affection for his charming bride.

The Empress Marie Louise at the time of her marriage was hardly nineteen years old. She had fair hair and expressive blue eyes; her bearing was stately and her figure imposing; her hand and foot might have served as models, and her whole personality had the bloom and sweet, wholesome freshness of youth. She was shy, and towards the Court showed herself somewhat haughty and reserved; to intimates, however, she was kindly and affectionate. One thing is certain, that she was very fond of the Emperor, being devoted to him in every way. At their first interview the Emperor asked her what parting advice they had given her on leaving Vienna, when she replied, "To be yours wholly, and to obey you in everything." She certainly seemed to have no difficulty in conforming to such instructions. Nothing, however, could have been more different from the first Empress than was the

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second. With the exception of their even temper and affection for the Emperor, they had not a single point in common; in fact, their two characters were precisely different, and, it must be admitted, the Emperor often congratulated himself upon this difference, which he found piquant and charming. He himself it was who drew the following parallel:

"The one (Josephine) was all art and grace; the other (Marie Louise) was all innocence and simplicity. At no moment of her life had the ways and habits of the former ever been other than pleasant and seductive. It would have been impossible to find fault with her in this respect. She made the art of pleasing her constant study, obtaining her effect while concealing her method of doing so. Every artifice imaginable was employed by her to heighten her charms, yet so mysteriously, that at most one had but the merest suspicion of it. Marie Louise, on the other hand, ignored artifice and anything like dissimulation; all roundabout methods were unknown to her. The former never asked for anything, but was in debt everywhere. The latter, if in want of anything, never hesitated to ask, nor did she ever purchase aught without feeling conscientiously obliged to pay at once. Both had kind, sweet dispositions and were deeply attached to their husband."

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In such wise did the Emperor appreciate his two Empresses. It is plain that he desired the comparison to tell in favour of the second, and to this end he gave her credit for qualities which she did not possess, or, at any rate, he strangely exaggerated those which were hers.

The Emperor allowed Marie Louise five hundred thousand francs as pin-money, yet she never spent anything like that sum. She had but little taste in dress; in fact, if she had not been well advised as to what to wear, she would have looked dowdy. The Emperor always supervised her attire on occasions when he wished her to look well. He made her try on various *parures*, himself placing the ornaments on her brow, arms, and neck. He always chose the most splendid ones.

The Emperor proved himself to be an excellent husband to both his wives. He adored his son; in fact, as father and husband, he might have served as a model for all his subjects. However, though he himself has made a statement to the contrary, I do not think that he loved Marie Louise as much as he did Josephine. The latter had a special charm of her own, was so kind, so witty, so devoted to her husband that he could not fail to appreciate her rare and beautiful qualities at their real value.

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Marie Louise had youth, but she was cold and devoid of grace. I think she loved her husband, but she was reserved, not expansive; and she certainly never caused any of her household to forget Josephine.

In spite of her apparent submissiveness in dispensing with the services of her Austrian household, it is certain that Marie Louise was strongly prejudiced not only against her own suite, but also against the Emperor's. Never did she say a kind word to one of the Emperor's servants. I often saw her, but not a smile, not a look, not a sign on her part ever showed me that in her eyes I was anything but an utter stranger.

On my arrival from Russia, whence I returned after the Emperor, I lost no time in replying to his summons. In his apartment I found him talking to the Empress and Queen Hortense. The Emperor expressed his deep sympathy for my recent sufferings, and said many flattering things, which proved his kindly feeling towards me. Queen Hortense, in her own charming way, talked to me for some time in the friendliest possible manner. The Empress alone was silent. The Emperor at last remarked, "Well, Louise, have you nothing to say to poor Constant?" "I did not notice him," was the reply—an unfeeling one, too, for it was im-

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possible for Her Majesty not to notice me, as no one else was in the room but the Emperor, Queen Hortense, and myself.

At first the Emperor took the utmost precautions to prevent anyone, especially a man, from being alone with the Empress. In Josephine's time there used to be four ladies whose sole duty was to "announce" the persons received in audience by Her Majesty. Towards the new Empress they acted more as detectives than anything else, and dogged her footsteps wherever she went, entering her apartment before she got up in the morning, and never leaving her until she was in bed. Then all the exits from her chamber were closed with the exception of one which led through an adjoining room, where one or other of the aforesaid ladies slept. The Emperor himself could not join his wife at night-time without passing through this room. With the exception of M. de Menneval, private secretary, and M. Ballonhai, keeper of the privy purse, no person of the male sex was permitted to enter the Empress's private apartments without an order from the Emperor. It is said that he did not wish any man of the world to be able to boast of having had two minutes' private talk with the Empress; and he once sharply scolded a lady-in-waiting for unwittingly allowing

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M. Biennais, the Court jeweller, to show the Empress the advantages of a new letter-weight that he had just made for her. The Emperor on another occasion grumbled because the lady-in-waiting did not sit close to the Empress while M. Päer was giving her a music-lesson. But it is not true, as was stated, that Leroy, the Court milliner, was forbidden to enter the palace because once, when fitting her gown, he told the Empress that she had beautiful shoulders.

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CHAPTER XXI

The Emperor's wedding—The religious ceremony—Brilliant festivities—Paris gives the Empress a wedding present—The Emperor's honeymoon trip—Brussels and Antwerp—Coolness between the King of Holland and the Emperor—The latter loses his temper—Prince Louis' characteristics—The Emperor at Flushing—The Empress's first riding lesson—Her fondness for balls and parties—A whirl of gaieties—Fire at the Prince of Schwartzenberg's—The Emperor's presence of mind—The victims of the catastrophe—Napoleon's superstition—The Countess Durosnel—Abdication of the King of Holland—An Imperial riddle.

THE civil marriage of Their Majesties was solemnized at Saint-Cloud on Sunday, 1st of April, at two o'clock p.m., the religious ceremony being celebrated on the following day in the large gallery of the Louvre. By a strange coincidence the weather at Saint-Cloud was quite fine, while in Paris it poured in torrents. On the Monday it rained at Saint-Cloud, while in Paris it was gloriously fine, so that nothing might spoil the pomp of the procession nor mar the brilliance of the illuminations at night. In the jargon of that epoch, "the

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Emperor's star had twice vanquished the equinoctial gales."

On the Monday evening Paris seemed transformed into fairy-land. I never saw such brilliant illuminations. It was one vast series of magical effects. Houses, mansions, palaces, churches, all were ablaze with lights; even the church-spires gleamed like stars or comets suspended in mid-air. The residences of exalted dignitaries of State, the Austrian and Russian embassies, the palace of the Duc d'Abrantès, vied with each other in tasteful, dazzling embellishments. The Place Louis Quinze presented an admirable spectacle environed by orange-trees of fire, and one gazed in wonder and admiration at the splendid illuminations of the Champs Elysées, the Garde-Meuble, the Tuileries and the Corps Législatif.

The city of Paris presented the Empress with an enamelled toilette service, handsomer even than the one given to Josephine. The designs on each piece of furniture were executed by the first artists, the whole being matchless alike for solidity and elegance.

Towards the end of April Their Majesties made a tour through the Northern departments. This journey was exactly the same as the one which I

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took when in the Emperor's service in 1804, only this time the Empress was not Josephine the kind and gracious. Passing once more through all the towns where she had been so enthusiastically welcomed, where now homage was paid to her successor, on re-visiting Laaken, Brussels, Boulogne, Antwerp, and many another place through which I had seen Josephine pass in triumph, I thought sadly, regretfully, of her present loneliness and of her sorrowful life of seclusion, made more bitter to her by the news of honour and glory given to the woman who had supplanted her in the Emperor's affections and on the Imperial throne.

Their Majesties were accompanied by the King and Queen of Westphalia and Prince Eugene. At Antwerp we were present at the launch of a war vessel of eighty guns, which, before it left the stocks, was blessed by M. de Pradt, the archbishop of Mechlin. The King of Holland joined the Royal party at Antwerp. Between the Emperor and this monarch a coolness had sprung up, as Napoleon had lately laid claim to a part of the latter's kingdom, and soon afterwards seized the remainder. However, King Louis was present at the Emperor's nuptial festivities, and he had also been sent on in advance to welcome the bride; yet both brothers still main-

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tained their attitude of defiance, and it must be admitted that King Louis had good grounds for hostility. The strangest part of it all was that, when his brother was absent, the Emperor stormed with rage, and threatened him with dire punishment, but, if the two met, they behaved in the friendly familiar way that brothers do. Apart, one was Emperor of the French, the other King of Holland, their interests and views being strongly opposed; together, they were, if I may be permitted to say so, merely Napoleon and Louis, friends and companions ever since boyhood.

King Louis, however, was habitually sad and melancholy; the ills that beset him on the throne—where, in spite of himself, he had been placed—added to all his domestic troubles, evidently helped to make him most unhappy. All who knew him felt very sorry for him, for King Louis was an excellent master and a worthy, honest man. It is said that when the Emperor decreed the reunion of Holland to France, King Louis resolved to hold his own to the last at Amsterdam, and, by bursting the dykes, to flood the country, and thus arrest the advance of the French troops. I do not know if that be true, but from what I myself saw of the King's character, I am quite sure that, while brave enough to face all

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hazards, his naturally kind and humane disposition would have sufficed to deter him from putting such a scheme into execution.

At Middelburg the Emperor embarked on board the *Charlemagne* for Flushing harbour, which he desired to inspect. We had a terribly rough passage; three anchors were lost, and, for a time, our lives were in danger. The Emperor was very sea-sick; he continually flung himself down in his berth, making vain efforts to vomit. Luckily I did not suffer in the least; thus I was able to give my master all the care that he needed. Every member of his suite was sick. This lasted three whole days, and the Emperor was boiling over with impatience to land. On leaving the vessel he was heard to remark that he thought he would have made but a sorry admiral.

Soon after our return to Paris, the Emperor wished the Empress to learn how to ride. She attended the Saint-Cloud riding-school, and several persons of the Imperial household went thither to watch her have her first lesson, myself included, and I saw how tenderly considerate the Emperor was towards his youthful bride. She had a very quiet, docile horse, the Emperor kept holding her hand and walking beside her, while M. Jardin, senior, had hold of the bridle. Directly the horse moved, the

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Empress screamed with fright, when the Emperor said, "Come now, Louise, be brave; what are you afraid of? I am here, am I not?"

The lesson passed off with coaxing on the one side and alarm on the other. Next day the Emperor ordered the on-lookers to be turned out, as they made the Empress nervous. Before long, however, she grew more plucky, and at last became an admirable horsewoman, often riding in the park with her ladies, including Madame de Montebello, who also looked extremely graceful on horseback.

The Empress, being young, was fond of balls and parties, so that the Court was very gay, and entertainments abounded. A ball given in honour of Their Majesties by Prince de Schwartzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador, was attended by disastrous results.

The Prince lived in the old Hôtel de Montesson in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. He had had a large ball-room built on to his residence, which was superbly decorated with a profusion of hangings, flowers, and lights. The Emperor was on the point of leaving when one of the curtains caught fire, and, blazing up, soon set light to the woodwork of the ceiling.

The Emperor was one of the first to notice the

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spread of the conflagration, and to foresee its awful results. He at once secured a passage of safety for the Empress, and having conducted her to the Champs Elysées, he went back to the burning mansion, and did not come home till four o'clock in the morning. His dress was disordered and begrimed with smoke. First of all, he went straight to the Empress, to assure himself that she had recovered from her fright; then, returning to his room, he flung his hat on the bed, sank into an arm-chair, and exclaimed, "Good God, what a *fête!*" I noticed that the Emperor's hands were all black, and that he had no gloves. He had lost them in the fire. His Majesty seemed greatly dejected. While I undressed him, he asked me if I had been to the ball. I said no, so he graciously condescended to give me certain details of this deplorable disaster. He told me, with great emotion, how the Prince's sister-in-law had perished in the flames, while others had met with serious injuries.

The Emperor was much agitated. I had been careful to prepare a bath for him, as I knew that he would need it, and this refreshed him considerably. I remember that he then expressed his fears to me that this dreadful catastrophe was the presage of events more dire; and for a long while he was

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thus apprehensive. Three years afterwards, during the deplorable Russian campaign, news reached the Emperor of the destruction of the army corps commanded by Prince de Schwartzenberg, who was among the killed. Luckily the news was false, but when first the Emperor heard it, he exclaimed, as if in reply to a thought which had long haunted him, "So the ill omen was meant for *him!*"

In the morning the Emperor sent pages to carry his compliments to all those who had suffered by the catastrophe, and also to enquire how they did. Among the sufferers was the Comtesse Durosnel, who had been dreadfully burned and was ill for years afterwards. She was rescued in heroic fashion by her husband, General Durosnel. As he was going out to fetch a carriage for her, while crossing the courtyard he looked back, and by the light of the burning house spied a thief, who snatched his wife's comb from her headdress as she lay there in a swoon. It was a diamond comb of great value, and was never recovered.

Madame Durosnel was just as devoted to her husband. During the second Polish campaign, General Durosnel was lost for several days, and in the despatches was stated to be dead. The Countess, in despair, became seriously ill, and lay

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at the point of death. Then news reached her that the General, though dangerously wounded, was so far safe, and might recover. Madame Durosnel grew wild with joy on hearing this. She made a pile in the courtyard of all her widow's weeds and gowns of dismal black, set fire to them, and burned them amid shouts of hysterical joy.

Two days after the Schwartzenberg catastrophe, the Emperor received news of the abdication of King Louis. At first His Majesty seemed greatly annoyed, and said, "I foresaw such folly on the part of Louis, but I did not think he was in such a hurry about it." Soon afterwards, though, the Emperor took his brother's part, and some days after, when dressing, His Majesty asked me, "Constant, can you tell me which are the three capitals of the French Empire?" Then, without giving me time to answer, he added, "Paris, Rome, and Amsterdam. That sounds well, doesn't it?"

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CHAPTER XXII

Marie Louise pregnant—Public interest—Birth pains—The Emperor's anxiety—M. Dubois in despair—The Emperor encourages him to proceed—The accouchement—Napoleon listens outside the door—Birth of the King of Rome—The Emperor's delight—Salute of guns—Paris makes holiday—Madame Blanchard and her balloon—The Royal christening—An unlucky accident—But the aeronaut is safe—Doubts as to Marie Louise's pregnancy—Napoleon's efficiency or the reverse—Constant's son dies of croup—Imperial sympathy—My wife at La Malmaison—Josephine's kindness to her.

MARIE LOUISE was now far advanced in pregnancy, and everything seemed to point to a successful delivery. This event was awaited by the Emperor with an impatience that all France shared. Just then it was curious to observe public opinion and public feeling in the early days of March, when the people, as yet ignorant of the sex of the child that should be born, formed countless conjectures and expressed fervent wishes that the infant might be a boy.

It was on the 19th of March, at seven p.m., that the Empress felt the first labour pains. From

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that moment all the palace was astir. The Emperor was told the news, and he immediately sent for M. Dubois, who for some time past had been staying at the castle, and whose skilful aid was now so necessary. All the members of Her Majesty's private household were in the room, including Madame de Montesquiou. The Emperor, his mother and sisters, and Doctors Corvisart, Bourdier, and Yvan remained in an adjoining apartment.

The Emperor frequently came in to say words of encouragement to his young wife. All the household servants were greatly excited, each being eager to get the first news of the accouchement. Slight pains had been felt throughout the night; towards five a.m. they entirely subsided. M. Dubois failed to detect any signs of an immediate accouchement, so the Emperor sent everybody away and proceeded to have his bath. He told me how much the Empress was suffering. "But," added he, "she has plenty of strength and courage."

Overcome with fatigue, the Empress slept for a few minutes, when all at once sharp pains awoke her, which gradually became worse, though they failed to bring about a crisis, and Dr. Dubois saw that it would be a very bad case.

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The Emperor had hardly been a quarter of an hour in the bath when the doctor came in, looking greatly concerned, to tell him that out of a thousand cases within his experience, one only had presented itself like that of the Empress. He said he did not think he could save the mother as well as the child. "Come, come, Dubois," said the Emperor, "don't lose your head. Save the mother, then; think only of her. I'll follow you directly." The Emperor jumped out of his bath, hardly waiting for me to dry him, and, putting on a dressing-gown, hurried downstairs. I was told that he affectionately embraced the Empress, bade her take heart, and held her hand for a while. Not being able, however, to master his emotion, he went out into an adjoining room, and there, trembling, and with ear bent to catch the slightest sound, he waited.

Instruments had to be used, and when Her Majesty noticed this she bitterly cried, "Because I am Empress, why must I be sacrificed?" Madame de Montesquiou, who was holding her head, said, "Courage, madam, I have been through it myself, and I assure you that your precious life is not in danger."

The labour lasted twenty-six minutes and proved extremely painful. The child came out feet foremost,

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and it was with the utmost difficulty that the head could be got away. Pale as death, the Emperor waited in the ante-room; he seemed as one beside himself. At last the child was born, when he rushed into the room and kissed the Empress most affectionately, but never even glanced at the infant that they thought was still-born. In fact, for seven whole minutes it showed not the slightest sign of life. They just touched its lips with brandy, gently patted it all over its body, and wrapped it in warm napkins. At last it uttered a cry.

The Emperor hastened to embrace his son, whose birth for him was the latest and the greatest stroke of fortune. He seemed at the very acme of his joy, and went alternately from mother to son, as if unable sufficiently to feast his eyes on both. When going back to his room to get dressed, he said to me, "Well, Constant, it's a fine, big boy; he wanted his ears well pulled, and no mistake!" In this way he went about telling everybody he met.

It was by outbursts of domestic joy such as these that I could rightly feel how this great man, vulgarly supposed to care for nothing but fame and glory, delighted in the tranquil happiness which home-life gives.

From the moment that the bells of Notre Dame

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and other churches boomed at midnight until cannon proclaimed the birth of an heir to the throne, all Paris was in a wild state of excitement. This reached its height as the twenty-second gun told the nation that a son had been born. Hats were flung into the air; there were shouts of "Long live the Emperor!"; old soldiers shed tears of joy to think that they, by their hardships and privations, had helped to prepare a heritage for the new-born King of Rome, and that their hard-won laurels should deck the cradle of a dynasty.

Concealed behind the window-curtains of the Empress's room, Napoleon enjoyed the spectacle of his people's joy, by which he seemed to be profoundly touched. Large tears filled his eyes, and once more he stepped back to embrace his little son. Ambition, the glory of conquest, the sweet enjoyment of sovereignty, could never draw from his eyes a tear; but, lo! the bliss of fatherhood did this in a trice. Indeed, if ever Napoleon was justified in believing in his good fortune, it was now, when an Austrian archduchess had made him, who at the outset was but of humble origin, the father of a king.

The joyous news was telegraphed in all directions, and soon heartfelt congratulations poured in from every city and town throughout the Empire.

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Madame Blanchard, the aëronaut, started off in a balloon from the Military School, to announce the glad tidings to every town and village that she passed.

The christening took place on the 20th of March, at 9 p.m., in the Tuileries Chapel—a most magnificent ceremony. All Paris was illuminated, and there was a brilliant display of fireworks. Madame Blanchard's aërial trip proved unsuccessful. At Saint-Thiébault the wind failed her, so she returned to Paris, leaving her balloon behind. This, in some way or other, broke loose from its moorings and drifted away until it capsized near a town about six leagues distant. The inhabitants, finding only clothes and a small stock of provisions in the car, concluded that the aëronaut must have perished, and news of Madame Blanchard's dreadful death reached Paris at the very moment that the lady arrived there *in propria personâ*.

Many persons had their doubts as to Marie Louise's pregnancy, and some believed that the whole thing was a hoax. For my own part, I could never understand the absurd deductions of these incredulous folk; and as a proof that most of the persons who made such statements were actuated by malevolence and spite, I would point out that they always accused the Emperor of being a libertine, and said that he

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had several natural children. On the other hand, they believed him to be incapable of rendering a young, healthy princess of nineteen pregnant. If Napoleon could beget illegitimate children, why should he not have produced one that was legitimate, especially when his young wife was the very picture of healthy womanhood?

There were backbiters, too, who declared that Napoleon was capable of but little affection, and that the joy of fatherhood did not deeply touch his nature, which was devoured by ambition. One instance from a thousand others I may cite, as it particularly concerns myself, and I am the more pleased to make it a victorious rejoinder to the calumnies aforesaid, for it shows how specially kind and considerate the Emperor was towards me. Napoleon was very fond of children. One day he asked me to bring him my little son, so I went out to fetch him. Meanwhile M. de Talleyrand was shown into the Emperor's room, and the interview proved a lengthy one. My little boy was tired of waiting, so I took him back to his mother. Some time afterwards he got croup, and died in Paris while I was at Compiègne. The sad news reached me just as I was about to go down to dress the Emperor, and I was so much overcome that I felt unable to do my duty.

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The Emperor asked the reason of my non-appearance, and on learning the cause, said kindly, "Oh! poor Constant! We who are fathers know what such a loss means!"

Not long afterwards my wife went to see the Empress Josephine at La Malmaison, who deigned to receive her alone in her private boudoir, making her sit down beside her and endeavouring to console her in every possible way. The memory of such kindness is at once an honour and a consolation for us when we think what genuine sympathy was aroused by our child's death in the hearts of Napoleon and Josephine.

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CHAPTER XXIII

Marie Louise—Her simplicity—Dr. Corvisart's bread-pills—The Empress's quaint French—Visit to Caen and Cherbourg—The King of Rome's second christening—Marie Louise and her men-servants—Her coldness towards Madame de Montesquiou—The Duchess de Montebello—Fears of a rival—Josephine's reproaches—Josephine and the King of Rome—Her joy and emotion—Josephine's remarks to me—The King of Rome's nurse—Marie Louise and her son—Marie Louise and Josephine—The Empress leads a simple life—She rubs off Napoleon's kiss with her handkerchief—Her dislike of heat and scents.

NAPOLEON, as I have already said, used to compare Marie Louise with Josephine, saying that the former was replete with the charms of simplicity, modesty and innocence, while the latter was the very embodiment of art and grace. As regards the second Empress's simplicity, it occasionally verged on childishness. I will merely cite one anecdote which came to me from a trustworthy source. Thinking she was ill, the young Empress consulted Dr. Corvisart, who speedily perceived that her ailment was a purely imaginary one—the vague vapourings of a girl. Accordingly, his prescription for this dis-

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order consisted of pills made of bread and sugar, which he gravely enjoined the Empress to take. She soon found that she was much better, and thanked Dr. Corvisart for his skill, who did not deem it expedient to enlighten her further.

Having been educated at a German Court and getting her knowledge of French from masters only, Marie Louise found it difficult to speak the language with anything like ease. Among other faulty phrases which fell from her pretty lips, I recollect this odd transposition which continually jarred upon me: "Napoleon, what do want you?"

The Emperor showed the utmost affection for his youthful consort, while ever complying with the rigid rules laid down by Court etiquette, the Empress following his example with delightful grace. In the month of May, 1811, Their Majesties travelled through northern France. While at Caen, the Emperor signalised his visit by various benevolent and merciful acts, and over 130,000 francs were given to charity. From Caen Their Majesties proceeded to Cherbourg. The day after his arrival, the Emperor rode out betimes, visited various parts of the town, and went on board several ships, while an enthusiastic crowd followed him, cheering loudly. Everywhere he met with a most loyal

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and affectionate reception, which shows that the joy at the birth of the King of Rome was not confined to Paris, but that the provinces sympathised to the full as much as did the capital.

On their return to Paris, the Emperor and Empress made preparations for the grand public christening of the infant Prince. In fact, this year 1811 was a year of festivals and rejoicings. It offered a strange contrast to the one that followed, which was merely one long series of disasters. At all such *fêtes*, both public and private, everyone could but praise the consummate grace and dignity of the young Empress. Certain details as to her domestic life may prove of interest to my readers, so I may as well record them here.

Marie Louise seldom addressed her male attendants. Whether this was a habit acquired at the Austrian Court, timidity, indifference, or a dislike of letting inferiors hear her foreign accent, I cannot say, but the fact remains that she seldom opened her lips. Her major-domo told me himself that in three years she never once spoke to him.

The ladies of her household all agreed that she was kind and gentle. She had little liking for Madame de Montesquiou. Herein she was wrong, for Madame de Montesquiou was all kindness and

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attention for the little King of Rome. The Emperor alone appreciated this excellent lady and her many high qualities. Many were the reasons assigned for the Empress's coldness towards her; all of them were more or less frivolous. Yet the matter formed a constant topic of discussion among the Court ladies.

The following seems to me to be the most likely explanation. As lady-in-waiting the Empress had the Duchess de Montebello, a most charming and well-mannered person, and it would seem that between herself and Madame de Montesquiou there was little love lost. The Duchess, so they say, was afraid of having a rival in the friendship of her august mistress, and, indeed, it was from Madame de Montesquiou that she had most to fear, for this lady possessed all the qualities that charm and that inspire affection. Of noble birth, she had received a distinguished education, and to the tone and manners of the best society she added piety that was deep and enlightened. Calumny could never touch her moral character, which was noble and well-ordered. It may be that she was accused of being somewhat haughty, but it was a haughtiness tempered by a politeness both suave and sincere, so that it really ranked as dignity. Upon the King of Rome she

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ever bestowed loving and assiduous care, and from the Empress she certainly deserved great gratitude, not least when she gave up country, home, and friends to share the fate of a child whose future hopes had in a moment all been annihilated.

Madame de Montebello used to rise at a very late hour. In the morning, when the Emperor was away, Marie Louise used to go to her room for a chat, and to avoid passing through the apartment where the ladies-in-waiting assembled, the Empress used to go through a dark closet, at which these ladies were much hurt. I heard that Madame de Montebello injudiciously told the Empress all sorts of scandalous stories, some true and some false, about several of her Court ladies, tales that no young, simple, and pure-minded woman like Marie Louise ought ever to have heard. This it was that made her treat the members of her suite with coldness, and caused them to dislike her, and let such dislike be shared by their relatives and friends.

Josephine was deeply attached to Madame de Montesquiou. Not being able to meet, they wrote to each other, and continued to correspond until Josephine's death. One day Madame de Montesquiou received orders from the Emperor to take the little King to Bagatelle, where Josephine was;

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and the Royal infant was presented to her. Nothing was more affecting than to observe her joy at the sight of Napoleon's son. First she gazed at him with tearful eyes; then she took him in her arms and pressed him to her heart with indescribable tenderness. On this occasion no indiscreet on-lookers were present to watch the scene with ironical inquisitiveness and note Josephine's emotion, nor was there any absurd etiquette to freeze her founts of tenderness. The scene might have occurred in any middle-class home; it was a scene after Josephine's own heart. From the way she caressed the child it might have been that of any ordinary citizen, not the "son of Cæsar," as flatterers loved to style it, not the son of a great genius, from its birth a King. Josephine bathed it with her tears, addressing it in the sweet baby-language by which a mother alone can make herself understood and loved by her child. At length the short interview had to cease, which, brief though it was, had greatly cheered Josephine's loving heart. Madame de Montesquiou's visits became fewer and fewer after this one, much to Josephine's chagrin. But the child was growing up; a word or two indiscreetly uttered, a childish souvenir, or a slighter hint, even, might have angered Marie Louise, who feared Josephine. The Emperor

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was anxious to avoid all chance of a quarrel, which might have brought trouble to his home. So he ordered that these visits should become less and less frequent, until finally they ceased. Josephine is said to have declared that by the birth of the King of Rome she was repaid for all her sacrifices. Never was woman's devotion more unselfish nor more complete.

Directly after his birth, the King of Rome was entrusted to the care of a healthy, robust wet-nurse, chosen from the ranks of the people. This woman was never allowed to leave the palace, nor have any male visitor; the strictest precautions were taken to enforce this rule. For her health's sake she frequently drove out, always accompanied by several women.

At nine o'clock every morning the little King was brought to his mother, who caressed him for a few moments and then continued reading the newspapers. At four o'clock a return visit was paid by mother to son. Marie Louise went down to the Royal nursery, taking some pieces of embroidery with her, at which she worked all the while. Then, in about twenty minutes, M. Isabey or M. Prudhon would be announced, who had come to give her a lesson in drawing or painting, when she at once returned to her own apartments.

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One day when Bonaparte returned from shooting, tired out, he sent for Marie Louise. She came. The Emperor took her in his arms and kissed her lustily on the cheek. Marie Louise took out her handkerchief and wiped the place. "Why, Louise," cried the Emperor, "do I disgust you?" "Oh, no," she replied; "but I always do that when the King of Rome kisses me, too." The Emperor seemed vexed. Josephine was very different; she loved to be kissed by her husband, and always made the first advances. Sometimes the Emperor would say, "Louise, come and sleep with me." "No, it's too hot there," was the reply. It is true the Empress could not bear heat, and Napoleon's rooms were always warmed throughout. She also showed extreme dislike for scents and perfumes, and could only bear vinegar or sugar to be burnt in her apartments.

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CHAPTER XXIV

Journey through Flanders and Holland—M. Marchand—Little generally known of this Dutch journey—My refutation of statements in the "Contemporary Memoirs"—Incident at Montreuil—The miller and his mill—Boulogne—The English frigate—The conscript's wife—Napoleon crosses the Swine—The two fishermen—Marie Louise at the Brussels theatre—The mayor of Breda—The Empress buys lace—The Court smugglers—I am charged with fraud—Their Majesties at Utrecht—Review and speeches—Another false statement—Napoleon in Holland—Their Majesties at Amsterdam—Napoleon's affability—Talma and the actress—Napoleon meditates the invasion of Russia—The King of Rome's first tooth—The centenarian—A droll address—Arrival at Saint-Cloud.

In September, 1811, the Emperor resolved to travel through Flanders with the Empress, with a view to satisfying himself that the civil and religious government was being conducted precisely on the lines which he had laid down. Their Majesties left Compiègne on the 19th, and reached Montreuil-sur-Mer at five o'clock in the afternoon. I accompanied the Emperor on this occasion. In M. O'Meara's Memoirs I see that M. Marchand is stated to have formed one of the Emperor's suite, but this is

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incorrect, for Marchand did not enter His Majesty's private service until 1814, at Fontainebleau.

Part of my experiences during this journey shall now be told, details of which are little known. I shall also have occasion to refute sundry false statements which to my surprise and indignation I read in the "Contemporary Memoirs." It is important that the public should have correct information as to all the incidents of this journey, and be enlightened as to sundry episodes where calumny has sought to attack Napoleon's honour and my own. As the Emperor's humble yet devoted servant, I am anxious to make all that is doubtful quite plain, to refute all that is mendacious, to point out all that is inexact in statements affecting my Royal master and myself. I shall frankly do my duty; of this I have already given certain guarantees to those who have hitherto perused my Memoirs.

A trifling incident at Montreuil shows with what energy and zeal Napoleon used to inspect the works of fortification and reconstruction in the various towns. After visiting those at Montreuil and going over the ramparts, the Emperor proceeded to the citadel, and then went on to look at the outer fortifications. A tributary of the river Canche blocked his passage. All the members of his suite hastened

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to construct a bridge of boughs and planks, but the Emperor, growing impatient, waded across, the water reaching his knees. The owner of a mill on the opposite side gave His Majesty his arm and helped him to climb the embankment. He took this opportunity of pointing out to the Emperor that his mill, being in a line with the projected fortifications, must necessarily be pulled down. Turning to his engineer officers, His Majesty said, "See to it that this good fellow receives compensation for the loss which he is about to incur."

Boulogne was reached on the 20th. This was the Emperor's second visit. He at once proceeded to review the fleet. An English frigate seemed disposed to watch the manœuvres, so the Emperor instantly despatched a French frigate in chase of the hostile vessel, which speedily disappeared.

On the 29th of September the Emperor reached Flushing, and thence proceeded to inspect the Terveere fortifications. While doing this, a young woman suddenly flung herself at his feet, and, with tears in her eyes, tremblingly presented a petition. Napoleon good-naturedly helped her to rise, and enquired the nature of her request. "Sire," sobbed the poor woman, "I am the mother of three children; their father is one of Your Majesty's re-

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cruits, and we are left in great distress." "Sir," said the Emperor, turning to one of his suite, "take the man's name; I will make him an officer." The young woman strove to express her deep gratitude, but tears choked her utterance, and she could not say a single word. Then the Emperor passed on.

Another benevolent act made his visit to Ostend memorable. On leaving this town he went along the Estrau. Not wishing to go round by way of the locks, he preferred to cross the Swine in a fishing-boat, accompanied by the Duke of Vicenza, Count Löbau, an aide-de-camp, and two chasseurs of the guard. Two poor fishermen were in charge of the boat, which, with all its gear, was worth about 150 florins. It was all they had in the world. The crossing lasted about half an hour. His Majesty reached Fort Orange wet through and suffering from the cold. A large fire was lighted, at which he gladly warmed himself. Then the fishermen were asked what their fare was, and they said a florin a head. Napoleon sent for them and gave them a hundred louis, besides awarding them each a pension of three hundred francs for life. It is difficult to imagine the joy of these poor fellows, who never dreamed that they had had such an illustrious passenger on board. They soon told everybody, and in a short time the whole country

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round about had heard the news. Not a few hearts were thus won for Napoleon. Indeed, the Empress Marie Louise did much to stimulate popular enthusiasm when she appeared in public, always evoking hearty cheers.

Two months before the arrival of Their Majesties, Holland, every part of it, was ready to give him a worthy welcome. No village, however small, on the Emperor's route but showed itself eager to make his reception as grand as it possibly could. The Emperor travelled with almost his entire Court—lords-in-waiting, ladies of honour, chamberlains, equerries, everybody. He wished to dazzle the good Dutch folk by the splendour of his retinue. Nor did it fail to make a deep impression. The city of Amsterdam, where the Emperor proposed to stop for a time, suddenly found itself strangely embarrassed. There was a spacious palace ready for His Majesty, but it had no stabling attached. For Napoleon's suite such accommodation was obviously indispensable. King Louis' stables, besides being inadequate, were too far off from the palace itself to allow of a section of the Emperor's suite being lodged there. Great was the civic embarrassment and perplexity as to where the Royal horses should be housed. To improvise stables at a moment's notice was impossible. Then one of

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the palace farriers, M. Emery by name, came to the rescue. A man of intelligence and an old soldier, he had learnt from Napoleon how never to be baffled by any emergency, and, to the great astonishment of the townsfolk, he proposed to transform their flower market into a vast stable, and to place under huge tents all the Imperial horses and equipages.

To a story published in the "Contemporary Memoirs" about Napoleon and the mayor of Breda, it behoves me here to give formal contradiction. There it is stated that the mayor had strong English sympathies, and was ill disposed to accord the Emperor a very hearty reception. However, lapped in all the glories of his office, he was about to commence a pompous harangue while formally presenting to his Royal visitor the keys of the city. But the Emperor, knowing the mayor of Breda's political opinions, rudely replied, as he kicked the tray containing the keys, which fell to the ground, "Begone! Keep your keys to open the city gates to your dear friends, the English! As for myself, I enter your city by right, for I am its lord and master."

This anecdote is absolutely false. The Emperor, though occasionally brusque, would never have compromised his dignity in so strange and, I may add, in so ridiculous a manner. To the author of the

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"Memoirs" this tale may seem an amusing invention; I myself am bound to confess that it lacks both truth and wit.

At last the Emperor rejoined his august consort at Brussels, where his presence evoked general enthusiasm. From a hint at once delicate and politic which he gave, Marie Louise purchased a hundred and fifty thousand francs' worth of lace so as to stimulate trade. The introduction of English goods into France was at that time strictly forbidden; any that happened to be seized were ruthlessly burnt. No part of Napoleon's systematic hostility to England's naval arrogance was more zealously enforced by the Emperor than the laws of contraband. Belgium at that time had quantities of English goods which were carefully hidden, and which everyone was eager to buy on the principle of "forbidden fruit." All the ladies of the Empress's suite made large purchases and filled several carriages therewith, not without fear that Napoleon might get to know of this and confiscate all on reaching France. Thus carriages with the arms of the Emperor on their panels crossed the Rhine and, bearing their precious freight, passed through the gates of Coblenz. It was a moment of painful uncertainty for the custom-house officials. Should they stop the vehicles and

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search them? or should they frank them through as part of the Emperor's luggage? After mature deliberation they decided to adopt the latter course; so the carriages proceeded to Paris without further hindrance. Had they been stopped, it is probable that Napoleon would have warmly commended the officials for their courage, just as it is certain that he would mercilessly have burned all the contraband goods.

With reference to these latter, I find in "Contemporary Memoirs" another anecdote, which, like the previous one, seems to have been composed by way of a joke. Personally, it is important for me to refute it, for I am made to play therein a most unworthy part, and incur disgrace which was certainly never mine. Though I am loth to bore the public with this purely personal matter, I feel bound to state the truth, and give the lie to this tale about Napoleon, whose character in these amazing "Memoirs" is so wantonly and gratuitously misrepresented.

"Marie Louise (so we learn), unknown to the Emperor, endeavoured to procure several articles of English manufacture for her toilette. Accordingly, one of the ladies-in-waiting was commissioned to purchase all that was finest and costliest from the

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sons of Jacob, who charged a mighty percentage on all they sold to recoup themselves for the risk.

"Constant, the Emperor's head valet, though well aware that his master abhorred everything that came from England, was yet indiscreet enough to buy certain articles which had been manufactured there. The Emperor was told of it, and instantly ordered this smuggler to be sent back to France. He was also dismissed from his post. Constant, who knew that Marie Louise also indulged in a little smuggling, asked her to intercede for him, and she induced the Emperor to pardon him. With difficulty the Emperor was persuaded to relent, who vowed that the first person who infringed his orders again should be straightway strung up to the mizen-mast of one of his war-ships."

From first to last this statement is wholly untrue. Can it be reasonably supposed that Marie Louise would secretly endeavour to procure English goods, knowing, as she did, how detestable these were to the Emperor? Apart from the fact that the young Empress was the last person likely to cause her husband such annoyance, the Emperor would soon have found out that she had been deceiving him if ever Marie Louise thought of wearing any of the prohibited apparel, for he was marvellously quick at

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recognising where the different stuffs she wore came from; sometimes, even, he helped her to choose these. Strange indeed it was to see this mighty man, busied with vast schemes, descend from his lofty sphere to discuss millinery in all its petty details. The fact is, Bonaparte knew how to be at once a great and yet an ordinary man. Simplicity to him was as easy as grandeur; I never saw him at a loss under any circumstances.

As for the paragraph concerning myself, I can only call it a lie. I never at any time smuggled; it was not in my nature to do so, nor had I any inclination for such a practice. To take advantage of my position in the Emperor's household, in order to indulge in shameful traffic of this sort, would have been at once foolish and dangerous. Honoured by Imperial goodwill, I, more than anybody, was bound to obey my august master. Thus I can but give formal denial to the passage in "Contemporary Memoirs," where the writer, finding the tale to his liking, has developed it in a charming fashion, no doubt, but with a conspicuous disregard for truth.

Not content with inventing a false tale about myself, the author of these "Contemporary Memoirs" appends thereto a libellous note blaming me for my conduct at Fontainebleau in 1814. This note states

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that, after I had received a present of 50,000 francs from the Emperor in order to accompany him to the isle of Elba, I basely forsook him; while others who had no motive for so doing, made it their duty to share the fate of their fallen Sovereign. Later on in these Memoirs of mine I shall deal at length with this subject, and the public shall judge. It is not I who will flinch from telling the whole truth. Enough if now I vehemently protest against this accusation of ingratitude. To the lying author of this note, that is my sole reply.

On the 6th of October, Their Majesties reached Utrecht. It rained in torrents, yet the streets were gaily decorated and thronged with people, and the civic authorities were all astir since early morning. In spite of the bad weather, immediately after his arrival Napoleon got on horseback and reviewed a detachment of the troops. He was accompanied by a large staff and crowds of spectators, most of whom were drenched to the skin. After the review Napoleon returned to the palace, where a deputation awaited him in an immense hall, as yet unfurnished, which had been built by King Louis. Without changing his clothes, he politely received in audience all who had come to offer their congratulations, and listened with forbearance to all their harangues.

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Here again the author of "Contemporary Memoirs" has managed to make foolish and insulting remarks about Napoleon. He states that:

"Napoleon on reaching his apartments felt tired after his ride, and lay down on his bed, though his presence was awaited in the dining-room, where important personages were assembled. He sent word to the Empress to sit down to table without him. Marie Louise came to his room and endeavoured to explain how embarrassing it was for her to entertain all these utter strangers. But Napoleon insisted, and the Empress was obliged to dine without him. They sat down to table, and God knows the dinner was dreary enough. The Empress could not hide her annoyance, while the guests were scandalised at such conduct on the part of their host. Their disgust deepened when Napoleon at last appeared, after having had his nap, in a dressing-gown and slippers."

Then follow sundry philosophical reflections and two verses, which I will spare my readers. Like its predecessors, the tale is dressed up with spicy details; but this is so much wasted art, for the anecdote is as false as it is absurd. On no occasion did the Emperor ever venture to commit such a flagrant breach of good manners. In no country

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would he ever have thus gratuitously embittered the upper classes by displaying such vulgar disdain for exalted functionaries invited to his table by the chamberlain in his name. He had too much tact and too much common sense ever to forget himself in this way. Above all, he would never have behaved thus in Holland, in a country which had just come under his sway, and where the people had ranked as his subjects for but a few days; in Holland, where, more than anywhere else, he had need of that suavity which made conquered peoples attached to their conqueror; in Holland, where hundreds of times he had to exercise personal charm—almost actual coquetry—to neutralise, by winning hearts, the baneful, inevitable effect of his commercial measures! Is it credible that he would have dared to show himself so outrageously impolite, or would have thus gratuitously insulted, in the person of its aristocracy, a good-natured yet susceptible people, the more sensitive to insult because it was rumoured that certain fine gentlemen of the Court of France sneered at its simplicity?

In addition to the above, we read that "wherever Napoleon was, the valet on duty had always to see that a hot bath was in readiness at any hour, and for this purpose a stoker was specially employed,

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whose sole duty was to see that the water was kept at the particular temperature which the Emperor liked. At Utrecht, Napoleon occupied his brother Louis' bedroom on the ground floor, which had a bath-room attached. On the evening of his arrival, when the Emperor had gone to bed, the lad in charge of the bath, though wet through and tired out like most of the other servants, prepared the bath as usual, and then lay down in an adjoining closet. In the night, wishing to satisfy an urgent need, he got up to go out. Unfortunately, he did not know his way about. Half-asleep as he was, he spied a little door, gently turned the handle, suddenly found himself in another room, and hastily endeavoured to pass through it, groping his way as best he might. In doing so he knocked a chair over, when a voice loudly exclaimed, "Who's there?" The lad recognised it as the Emperor's, and, terrified at his mistake, he completely lost his head. He tried vainly to find some way out, and in doing so knocked against other pieces of furniture, and made more noise. The Emperor repeated his question in tones more vehement still, and thinking someone had come to take him unawares, he jumped up, seized the huge silver watch which always hung at the head of his bed, and caught

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the unlucky youth by the collar, who was half-dead with fright. Napoleon, roused thus from his first sleep, thought that he had come to murder him, and called out for help. Instantly a valet came running in with lights, and discovered the Emperor of the French in the act of throttling a poor devil who, not daring to defend himself, only struggled to escape from his grasp. After the valet came the chamberlain, an aide-de-camp, the Grand Marshal, and the Prefect of the Palace; in a moment the whole Court was afoot. Before the real facts could be made known, a thousand wild reports were afloat, among others that an attempt had been made to kidnap Napoleon, that a man had tried to murder him, but that he had strangled the assassin. The fact is, if he had had firearms handy, it is certain that he would have shot the unlucky servant who thus awoke him. As it was, he only dealt him several lusty thumps with the huge watch that served him as a weapon."

My reply to this amusing fiction is the following very simple one. First of all, Roustan and another valet always slept in a room adjoining the Emperor's, and through which it was necessary to pass in order to reach His Majesty. In the second place, a night-light was always burning in the Emperor's bed-chamber.

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Their Majesties' entry into Amsterdam was of the most brilliant description. In a car drawn by splendid horses the Empress preceded the Emperor by a few hours, he making his entry on horseback, surrounded by a brilliant staff, amid enthusiastic cheers. He seemed profoundly satisfied, perhaps even justly proud, at this reception, and at the universal sympathy which his presence called forth among the masses. The streets were draped with bunting (the French colours) in the most effective fashion, and he, who three years later took refuge at night-time in the Tuileries, after finding it hard to obtain admission, now passed on beneath the gay triumphal arches, with all his glory as yet unsullied by defeat, for hitherto fortune had not proved fickle. Such parallels to me are painful, but, despite my wish, I cannot avoid making them, as I bear in mind that no year of the Empire was marked by more *fêtes*, triumphal progresses, and popular rejoicings than the year which preceded all the disasters of 1812.

Some of the actors from the Théâtre Français formed part of the Court suite in Holland, and Talma gave his famous impersonations of Bayard and Orosmane. A French comedy company played a vaudeville at Amsterdam in honour of Their Majesties, but I forget its title.

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Here I feel bound to contradict another false statement made by the author of "Contemporary Memoirs," concerning the Emperor's alleged intrigue with pretty Mademoiselle Bourgoin, the actress. I here quote the passage in question:

"Mademoiselle Bourgoin, so they say, was foolish enough to succumb to the temptation of making sundry indiscreet disclosures, publicly boasting that it was her charms which attracted the Emperor to the playhouse where she appeared. These little trumpetings reached His Majesty's ears, and he forebore to visit the theatre in future. He also charged Talma, for whom he had à great liking, to tell the pretty actress to hold her tongue, as if she committed the slightest indiscretion she would at once be sent back to France with a strong escort."

This scarcely tallies with a remark made by His Majesty when at Erfurt to the Emperor Alexander *à propos* of this actress, and which readers of my book will recollect. This remark surely proves that Napoleon was in no way smitten by her charms. Further and more conclusive proof we have in the habitual discretion which His Majesty always exercised in all his affairs of gallantry.

Throughout his journey in Holland the Emperor showed himself kind and affable, welcoming all persons

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and saying just the right thing to each. Never had he seemed more amiable or more anxious to please. He visited factories, inspected dockyards, reviewed troops, addressed sailors, and honoured balls by his presence. In such a round of apparent gaiety and amusement he showed more energy even than in the grim, unquiet life of camps. To his new subjects he was ever gracious, courtly, and urbane, with a bright word for all. Yet perhaps at heart he may have felt troubled and anxious, for it was then, in the midst of these merry scenes, that he was meditating upon the expedition to Russia. Perhaps such amenity, graciousness, and benevolence formed part of his plan to soften the discontent which the idea of such a campaign would of necessity beget; possibly, too, he thought that by winning all hearts now, by using all the magnetism of his personality to charm and to attract his subjects, he would secure pardon from his enthusiastic followers for a war which, whatever its outcome, must needs cost the Empire an ocean of blood and of tears.

During Their Majesties' stay at Amsterdam, a piano had been placed in the Empress's boudoir which had the appearance, when closed, of a small writing-table. In one corner of it stood a little bust of the Russian Emperor. Soon after the instrument's

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arrival, Napoleon came in to see if the Empress found everything comfortable in her rooms. He noticed the bust, placed it under his arm and took it away without saying a word. He afterwards told one of the ladies-in-waiting that he wished the bust to be removed. The order was obeyed, but it caused some astonishment, for as yet no one had reason to suppose that there had been any misunderstanding between the two Emperors.

Some days after his arrival in Amsterdam, the Emperor made sundry excursions in the neighbourhood, accompanied by a few members of his suite. He went to visit Saardaam, and the hut which once sheltered Peter the Great when in Holland disguised as Peter Michaeloff. After remaining there for a quarter of an hour, the Emperor remarked to his Grand Marshal, "That is the finest monument in all Holland."

While on this journey Their Majesties received news that the little King of Rome had cut his first tooth, but the interesting event had in no way affected the illustrious infant's health.

In one of the little towns of North Holland, the authorities asked the Emperor to be allowed to present to him an old man who was one hundred and one years old. He commanded the veteran to be

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brought before him. The old fellow was still hale and hearty, and had formerly been in the Stadtholder Guards. He presented a petition, in which he besought the Emperor to exempt from active service one of his grandsons, who was the mainstay of his old age. His Majesty, through an interpreter, replied that he should not be deprived of his grandson, and Marshal Duroc was instructed to give the old fellow a practical proof of the Emperor's liberality.

In another small Frisian town the local authorities addressed the Emperor in the following quaint fashion: "Sire, we were afraid of seeing you with your whole Court; you are almost alone, so we can have a better look at you. Long live the Emperor!" His Majesty applauded this loyal speech, and gracefully thanked the spokesman. Passing through Haarlem, The Hague, and Rotterdam, Their Majesties left Holland, and crossing the Rhine at Cologne, they reached Saint-Cloud in the early days of November, 1811.

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CHAPTER XXV

Marie Louise—Her portrait and characteristics—The Emperor complains of her coldness towards the Court ladies—Her comparison with Josephine—Her charitableness—Napoleon impressed by her bounty—How Marie Louise spent her time—Breakfast and toilette—Her visits to Madame de Montebello—She plays at billiards and rides—Her lunch off pastry—The Duchess de Montebello's portrait and that of the Emperor Francis—The King of Rome—His character and disposition—Fanny Soufflot—Albert Froment and the little King—The Emperor and his son—Grimaces before the mirror—Napoleon plays with his son at Trianon—The little King in the Council chamber—A King ought never to be afraid—The child's strange caprice.

MARIE LOUISE was a very beautiful woman. She had a majestic figure, a noble bearing, fresh complexion, fair hair, and expressive blue eyes. Her feet and hands were the admiration of the whole Court; yet, if anything, she was a trifle stout. Some of this excessive plumpness she lost on coming to France, thus gaining considerably in grace and comeliness.

So much for her personal attractions. Towards those persons with whom she habitually associated she was affable and expansive. Then all the pleasure of such free informal talk was written on her coun-

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tenance, which lighted up and assumed particular charm. But on State occasions, when she had to pose as the Empress, her shyness was extreme. Society seemed to transform her entirely, and as people not to the manner born invariably look awkward when trying to appear high-bred, so Marie Louise, who on reception-days was always ill at ease, formed the subject of not a little unjust criticism, for, as I have said, her frigid manner was really due to excessive bashfulness.

It was when she first came to France that Marie Louise suffered most from such shyness. This was not strange in a young princess suddenly transplanted to a society wholly novel to her, whose habits she had to assume and whose tastes she had to affect; and though her exalted position would naturally have drawn society to her, here matters were reversed, and she had in some measure to go herself in search of society. It is this which explains the stiffness of her bearing towards the Court ladies. But this was only at first. As relationship grew more frequent, more regular, it became less constrained; and as the young Empress chose her associates with almost girlish impulsiveness, the first frigid, lofty airs were laid aside, only to be assumed on grand occasions. Her disposition was placid and thoughtful. It needed but

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little to arouse her sensibilities, and yet, though easily moved, she was undemonstrative. The Empress had received a very careful education. She had a cultivated mind, very simple tastes, and all the accomplishments, detesting dreary hours of idleness; indeed, she liked to be always occupied, finding herein the sole remedy for boredom. On the whole, I think she was just the wife for the Emperor. She was too fond of her home ever to have a share in political intrigues. Very often she knew nothing of public affairs, Queen and Empress though she was, except through newspapers. After a tiring, agitating day, it must have been no small solace for the Emperor to withdraw to so peaceful a home, and to the happiness of domestic life. An intriguing wife, a political babbler, would verily have driven him mad.

Nevertheless the Emperor sometimes complained of the want of affability displayed towards the Court ladies by his bride. Her excessive reserve was trying to him in a country where, perhaps, it is common to err in the opposite direction; he may have remembered Josephine and the old days, when her unchanging gaiety gave to the Court perpetual charm. He must have been struck by the contrast; yet was there not just a touch of unfairness in such a comparison? Marie Louise was an Emperor's daughter,

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used only to courtiers, and to whom commoners were totally unknown. Nor did her sympathies extend beyond the walls of her palace in Vienna. One fine day she arrived at the Tuileries, in the midst of a people whom she had never set eyes on, except dressed as soldiers; and thus her stiff manners towards the brilliant members of Parisian society seem to me in a measure excusable. The Empress Josephine loved the people because she had once belonged to their ranks. On coming to the throne, her broad, generous sympathies could but gain thereby, for they had now wider scope.

Kindhearted as she was, Marie Louise ever strove to do good. Her benevolence and, above all, her delicate methods of performing kindly acts will long be remembered. Every month from the sum allotted her for dress she took ten thousand francs to give to the poor. Nor did her charity stop here. She eagerly sought to help any in distress when aware of their trouble. So eager indeed was she that it looked as if she had been suddenly reminded of a lapse of duty when only the chord of sympathy in her heart had been touched. I do not think that she ever met such appeals by a refusal. The Emperor, on hearing of any fresh act of charity performed by the Empress, was deeply moved.

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Every morning at eight o'clock the curtains and blinds of the Empress's room were partially drawn up, and the newspapers were brought to her, which she perused. Then either chocolate or coffee was served, with a kind of pastry called "conque." This repast she took in bed. At nine o'clock she rose, dressed for the morning, and received certain visitors. Every day, in the Emperor's absence, she went upstairs to see Madame de Montebello. At eleven she lunched, usually alone, afterwards making music or needlework her pastime. Occasionally she had a game at billiards. At two o'clock she rode or drove out with Madame de Montebello, accompanied by certain other members of her suite. On her return she took a little light refreshment, consisting of pastry and fruit. After lessons in painting and music she dressed for the evening, and dined at six o'clock with the Emperor, or, in his absence, with Madame de Montebello. The dinner consisted of only one course. Then came receptions, concerts, plays, &c., and the Empress retired to rest at eleven o'clock. One of her ladies always slept in the room immediately adjoining her bed-chamber, and through this room the Emperor had to pass whenever he wished to sleep with his wife.

These arrangements were often upset when the

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Emperor was there, but in his absence they were punctually adhered to, as the Empress liked to do the same thing exactly at the same time. The members of her private household all seemed much attached to her, for, if grave and cold in demeanour, she was ever just and kind.

When the Emperor was away, the Duchess de Montebello's portrait adorned the Empress's room, together with those of all the Austrian Imperial family. When Napoleon returned, the Duchess's portrait was taken away again. During the war between the Emperor and the rulers of Austria and Russia, the portrait of Francis II. was removed from his daughter's room by Napoleon's orders, and hidden away somewhere in disgrace.

The King of Rome was a very fine child, but he was less like the Emperor than Hortense's son. I only knew him in his infancy. Most noticeable at this age was his good temper, and his affection for those about him. He was very fond of a pretty young lady, Mademoiselle Fanny Soufflot, who hardly ever left him. He delighted to see her dressed out in her finest frocks, and one day asked the Empress, or his governess, Madame de Montesquiou, for certain trinkets that he thought nice, that he might present these to his little friend. He made her

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promise that, when he grew up, she would follow him to the wars, making several pretty speeches to her of the sort that denote a noble heart.

One of the playmates of the "little King," as he called himself, was a child named Albert Froment, the son of a lady at Court. One day, when playing together in the garden of Saint-Cloud, Albert wanted the little King's barrow, and tried to take it from him. The latter resisted, so Albert struck him. The little King at once exclaimed, "If anyone saw you, wouldn't you catch it! But I won't tell!" To me, this is a characteristic trait.

One day he was at the palace windows with his governess, watching the passers-by, and gleefully pointing out anything and anyone that took his fancy. Looking down, he saw a woman in widow's weeds with a little boy of three or four, also in black. The child had a petition in his hand, which he held out to the little Prince as if begging him to receive it. These black garments greatly puzzled the young monarch, and he asked his governess why the poor little boy was dressed all in black.

"No doubt because his papa is dead," replied the governess.

The little King seemed eager to speak to the childish petitioner, so Madame de Montesquiou,

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ever desirous to foster her young pupil's generous inclinations, gave orders for the woman and child to be shown up. The former was the widow of a brave fellow who had lost his life in the last campaign, and being now in great distress, she besought the Emperor to grant her a pension. The young Prince took the petition, and promised to deliver it to his papa. Next day, when going to see the Emperor as usual, he said, "Papa, here's a petition from a little boy whose father lost his life through you. Do give him a pension?" Much touched, Napoleon embraced his son, and the brevet awarding the pension was despatched that same day.

The Emperor was passionately fond of his son. Whenever he saw him, he would catch him up in his arms and dandle him from floor to ceiling, delighted at the child's pleasure. He would tease him, too, setting him in front of a mirror, and then making a thousand grimaces, at which the boy laughed until the tears came. At lunch he would take him on his knee, dip one finger in the sauce, make him suck it and rub it all over his face. The governess protested, but the Emperor only laughed the louder, while the boy in his zeal for the game begged his father to repeat the experiment. That was the right moment to present petitions, which

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were always favourably received if the little mediator put in a word.

When romping thus the Emperor showed himself more childish even than his little son. The Prince was only four months old when his father placed his three-cornered hat on his head. Naturally the child began to cry, when the Emperor, giving him an affectionate hug, said, "What, sir? are you going to cry? A king that cries? Fie! fie! that's naughty!"

Once on the lawn at Trianon I saw the Emperor place his sword-belt round the child's shoulders and his hat upon his head. Then he stood with outstretched arms some distance off, while the little fellow tottered towards him, his tiny feet sometimes tripping up against his father's sword. And I saw, too, how eager His Majesty was to save his little playmate a fall.

Once in his study he was lying on the carpet, and the child, seated astride, as if on horseback, was clambering up until he reached his father's face, when he kissed him. Another time the boy entered the council-chamber just as a conference had ended. The ministers and councillors were still there. The child ran straight into his father's arms without noticing anyone else. "Sir," said the Emperor,

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"you have not saluted these gentlemen." Then the boy turned round, bowed gracefully, and his father carried him off.

When he came to see the Emperor he always ran on ahead, leaving Madame Montesquiou far behind, saying to the sentry outside the Emperor's door, "Let me in; I want to see papa."

"Sire, I cannot open the door," was the reply.

"But I am the little King!"

"Sire, I am sorry; but I cannot do as you ask."

Meanwhile the governess came up, and, proud of her protection, the child would exclaim, "Open the door; the little King wishes it!"

To the child's morning and evening prayer Madame de Montesquiou had subjoined the words, "O God, grant that papa may make peace, so that France may be happy." One day the Emperor was present when his son was going to bed, who repeated this prayer as usual. The Emperor kissed him, but said nothing, as he smilingly glanced at Madame Montesquiou.

The Emperor would say to his son if frightened by his noisy romping and grimaces, "Come! come! a king ought never to be frightened!"

I recollect another story about the little Prince

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told to me by the Emperor himself one night as I was undressing him; His Majesty was highly amused by it. "You will never guess the extraordinary reward for good behaviour which my son asked for! If you please, he wanted his governess to let him roll about in the mud!"

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CHAPTER XXVI

The Abbé Geoffroy—Dr. Corvisart—The Emperor's liking for him—Cardinal Fesch—His volubility—I am entrusted with the Crown diamonds—Josephine sends for me—She gives me her portrait—The army en route for Russia—Moscow in a ferment—Barclay and Kutusoff—The Emperor escorted by Cossacks—They drink brandy like water—Murat and the Cossack horde—Platoff and the sorcerers—The French bivouacs—The Emperor's displeasure—Before the battle of the Moskowa—The Emperor on the Borodino heights—He is baulked by the rain—General Caulaincourt—The sun of Austerlitz—The Emperor's speech to his men—The King of Rome's portrait—It is shown to the officers and men of the Old Guard—The Emperor ill—Death of Count Auguste de Caulaincourt—His bride of a few hours—The Emperor and his dead generals—Lannes' fate—The Emperor's speech about General Ordener—The Emperor on the Moskowa battlefield—The cries of the wounded—"Poor Caulaincourt!"

EVERYONE is acquainted with the Abbé Geoffroy of caustic memory, and will remember his newspaper articles which drove the most popular actors and actresses to despair. This merciless critic must have started at an early age upon his thorny career; for if not deprived of life, which would have rejoiced many, at least he often lost health and rest in its

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pursuit. It is a good thing, no doubt, to attack those who can retort with their pen; for both antagonists the result in this case merely proves ludicrous. But the Abbé Geoffroy only observed one of the two conditions which allowed him to be a spiteful critic; his style was venomous enough, but he was no swordsman. In tackling some folk one had best possess both these advantages, in order to settle an argument.

One of the actors aforesaid, whom, as it appears, the Abbé was not over-prone to praise, sought to revenge himself in the following way. One night, when the play was over, knowing how next morning's newspaper would pitch into him, this actor caused Geoffroy the Terrible to be kidnapped as he was coming out of the theatre. Four lusty fellows blindfolded him, and carried him off to an unknown house, where a sound whipping was administered to him, much after the manner of a schoolboy's birching. That night, after having been well thrashed, the poor Abbé found himself turned out into the streets, and a long way from home. When told of this droll piece of work, the Emperor completely failed to see the joke of it. On the contrary, he was very angry, and said that if he found out the perpetrators of so scandalous an act he would punish them. "If

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a man," said he, "attacks you with his pen, you must retort with a pen, too." The fact is that the Emperor liked Geoffroy very much, and his articles were not submitted to the Censorship as were those of other journalists.

About Dr. Corvisart there was nothing of the courtier. He rarely appeared at Court except on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when he was on duty. He was extremely plain-spoken towards the Emperor, and very particular about his prescriptions being carefully observed. The Emperor was specially fond of him, always detaining him for awhile, as he seemed to enjoy his conversation. After the journey to Holland in 1811, one Saturday Dr. Corvisart called to see the Emperor, whom he found in the best of health. He then left the château for his country-seat, in order to enjoy a day's shooting, of which he was excessively fond. It was his custom never to say where he was going, so as not to be disturbed for some trifling matter.

One day after lunch, which as usual he bolted, the Emperor was suddenly seized with violent colic, and seemed very unwell. A messenger was instantly despatched for Dr. Corvisart, but he was nowhere to be found; not in Paris, nor yet in the country. He had gone out shooting, so his servants said, but

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where they did not know. So the messenger came back without the doctor, at which the Emperor was much put out, for he was in great pain. Finally he went to bed, and Marie Louise sat with His Majesty for awhile. Meantime Dr. Yvan had been called in, who prescribed certain remedies, which did the Emperor much good.

On Monday, instead of Wednesday, Dr. Corvisart, who perhaps felt uneasy, returned. When he entered Napoleon's apartment, the latter, who was in his dressing-gown, rushed up to the doctor, and catching hold of both his ears, exclaimed, "Well, sir, I suppose that, if I were seriously ill, I should have to dispense with your services, eh?" M. Corvisart apologised, asked the Emperor what had ailed him, what he had eaten, and promised that in the future he would always leave word with his servants where he was to be found, so that directly His Majesty wanted him he could be fetched. With this assurance the Emperor was quite satisfied.

His Majesty had a very great opinion of Dr. Corvisart, and persons who knew this preferred to entrust their petitions to his care, as he seldom met with a refusal from the Emperor. Yet I heard him once praising up M. de Bourrienne, and trying to explain how devoted he was to His Majesty. "No,

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no," replied the latter; "Bourrienne is too English. However, he's quite happy where I've put him—at Hamburg. He's fond of money, and can get plenty there."

It was in the course of the year 1811 that Cardinal Fesch became the Emperor's constant visitor. Their discussions always seemed to me to be of a stormy nature. The Cardinal stoutly maintained his own opinions, speaking in a loud tone, and with great volubility. In five minutes their dispute became an angry one, and then the Emperor would raise his voice as well. There was often an interchange of bitter speeches, and whenever I saw the Cardinal arrive I could not help pitying the Emperor, who was always greatly upset by such discussions. Once, as the Cardinal was leaving, I heard the Emperor bitterly remark, "Cardinal, you're a regular specimen of your tribe!"

A few days before our departure for Russia, the Emperor sent for me and told me to fetch the coffer containing the Crown diamonds from the Treasury and place it in his room, adding that I was not to go away as he would want me. At nine o'clock that evening I was again summoned, and found the Count de Lavalette, the Postmaster-General, in the Emperor's room. His Majesty opened the coffer in my

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presence, examined its contents, and said to me, "Constant, carry this coffer yourself to the Count's carriage, and wait there till he comes." The carriage was at the main entrance in the court-yard of the Tuileries. I had the door opened, got in, and waited until half-past eleven, when M. de Lavalette arrived, who had been all that time talking to the Emperor. I cannot explain this precaution of handing over the jewels to M. de Lavalette, but obviously there was some motive for it. The coffer contained the sword, its hilt encrusted with priceless diamonds, including the "Regent"; the grand collar of the Legion of Honour, with diamond epaulettes, buttons, buckles, and other ornaments of great value.

Just before leaving for the Russian campaign the Empress Josephine sent for me. I at once went to La Malmaison, where this excellent lady begged me to take great care of the Emperor, and to use every precaution to keep him safe and well. She made me promise that in the event of the slightest accident I would at once write to her, so that she might know exactly what had happened. She wept much, and could talk of no one but the Emperor, and after an affecting interview lasting over an hour, she gave me a gold snuff-box with her miniature on it, done by Saint.

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When starting for Russia, the Emperor sent advance-detachments of gendarmery along the three different routes to prepare lodgings, beds, canteens, &c. These men were under the command of Lieutenants Sarrazin, Verges, Molène and Pachot. Of our experiences I shall now speak more as I happen to recollect them than with regard to their chronological sequence, and I shall, moreover, devote a whole chapter to our journey from Paris to Moscow.

Shortly before the battle of the Moskowa a man was brought into camp dressed like a Russian, but who spoke French; at any rate, his language was a strange blend of both. He had escaped from the enemies' lines. Observing that our soldiers were only a short distance from him, he ran forward out of the ranks, flung down his rifle and, with a strong Russian accent, exclaimed, "I am a Frenchman!" Our men instantly made him their prisoner. Never was prisoner more delighted with his change of home, and he shook hands effusively with his compatriots. He seemed much abashed when brought before the Emperor, the "King of the French," as he called him. The Emperor questioned him at length. He said that at the sound of French guns his heart was in his mouth, and that his one fear was that he would be killed by his countrymen.

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Apparently he had been brought to Russia when a child by his family, his father earning a somewhat precarious livelihood in Moscow. At his death, his son was left penniless. To get bread the latter accordingly enlisted. He said that Russian discipline was one of the great reasons for his desertion, adding that he had stout arms and a stout heart, which were at the Emperor's service if he would allow him to join the French army. Such candour pleased His Majesty, who sought to get some information from him as to the actual state of things in Moscow. From his more or less intelligible statements, it was evident that all there was in a ferment. In the streets, he said, folk shouted, "Down with Barclay! Down with the traitor, the coward! Long live Kutusoff!" The commercial class, which, as the richest, had most influence, complained of a system of temporising which left things in an uncertain state and compromised the honour of Russian arms. They could not forgive the Emperor for putting his trust in a foreigner when Kutusoff the veteran, a Russian every inch of him, was given a subordinate place. The Emperor Alexander had never counted upon such energetic protests, and, at last, alarmed by these symptoms of revolt in his army, he had given in, and Kutusoff was appointed generalissimo. All

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Moscow had been illuminated to celebrate this important event. They talked of a great battle with the French; the Russian troops were wrought to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; all the soldiers wore green branches stuck in their shakos. The prisoner spoke in fear and trembling of Kutusoff, an old fellow with white hair, a big moustache and dreadful eyes. His uniform differed greatly from that of French generals; indeed, he wore very shabby clothes, though he might have had a splendid dress if he liked. When angry, he growled just like a lion, and never commenced a march before saying his prayers; he also crossed himself frequently during the day.

Content with such information as this, the Emperor dismissed the prisoner and gave orders that he should be allowed to go about the camp at will. Later on, he fought bravely alongside our men.

The Emperor entered Gjatz with a most singular escort. As the result of a skirmish, certain Cossacks had been taken prisoners, and His Majesty, who was very anxious to get information from any and every quarter, determined to question these savages. Two or three of them were accordingly brought to headquarters. These fellows seem as if

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they were made to be glued to a horse. Nothing was funnier than to see them walk, and their legs, which by perpetual gripping of the horse's flanks had become very bandy, were just like a pair of pincers. Their foot once out of the stirrup, they looked completely out of their element. Escorted by two such barbarians the Emperor entered Gjatz, and they seemed very proud of the honour. I repeatedly noticed how tickled the Emperor was by their appearance; the awkward shape of these Ukraine horsemen mightily amused him, especially when they gave themselves airs and graces. Their reports, which an interpreter had some difficulty in comprehending, seemed to confirm all that we had already heard as to the state of Moscow. These barbarians made the Emperor understand, by spirited gestures, convulsive movements, and warlike posturing, that very soon there would be a great battle between the Russians and the French. The Emperor had brandy given to them, which they gulped down as if it were water, and then coolly held out their glasses for more. They had stumpy little horses with long tails; very docile beasts, apparently. Alas! it would have been easy to see these without quitting Paris.

It is a fact on record that the King of Naples

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made a great impression on these barbarians. One day it was told to the Emperor that they wanted to make the King of Naples their "hetman." The Emperor laughed greatly at this proposal of theirs, and said he should be quite ready to second it. The King of Naples certainly had something theatrical about him, which must have fascinated the Cossacks; and he was always magnificently dressed. Riding at the head of his regiment, with long locks floating in the wind, dealing sabre-strokes right and left which mowed down his enemies like wheat, I can well conceive that for these savage warriors he must have had a strange charm, for such as they are touched merely by outside show. They say that with one sweep of his sabre the King of Naples drove back a whole horde of them. I do not know how far this is true, but at any rate it is quite possible.

The Cossacks believe in sorcery. This they have in common with all races that as yet are in their infancy. We were told an amusing anecdote about Platoff, the great Cossack chief. Pursued by the King of Naples, he retreated, and a bullet struck one of his officers beside him. Platoff was furious with his sorcerer, whom he caused to be flogged in the presence of all the hordes, bitterly reproaching

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him for not having shielded him from bullets by dint of his magic. Surely he must have believed more in this art than the sorcerer did himself.

On the 3rd of September, the Emperor issued orders from Gjatz to prepare for a general engagement. For some time past the regulations as to sentries had been sadly relaxed, and several detachments going out to forage had overstayed their time. The Emperor informed the various colonels of his displeasure at this, threatening that those men who were not in camp next day should not be allowed to fight. Words such as these need no comment.

The country round Gjatz was very fertile, and the crops were ripe for harvest. How different was their aspect two months later! A few days before the battle, Napoleon, with two of his marshals, rode out to inspect the neighbourhood. On the eve of so great an event, he conversed calmly and unconsciously, alluding to this land as if he were discussing some fair province of France. Wheat for the troops, so he said, was here in plenty; and they would have excellent winter quarters. The first care of those left in charge at Gjatz must be to encourage agriculture; and then he pointed out the river's charming curves, delighted with the beauty of the whole landscape. I never before

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saw the Emperor in so pensive, gentle a mood, so calm of speech, so serene of countenance. Never before had I so thoroughly realized the amazing depth and force of his intellect.

On the 5th of September the Emperor ascended the heights of Borodino to take in at a glance the respective positions of both armies. The day was cloudy, and soon a fine, drizzling rain fell, such as often occurs at the beginning of autumn. It was like a dense mist. The Emperor tried to use his glasses, but the veil which covered the land obscured his view; his field-glasses got wet and dim, and he wiped them repeatedly. He was much annoyed. The weather being cold and damp, he asked for his cloak, and, wrapping himself in it, said that it was impossible to stay there any longer, and that he had better get back to headquarters. Entering his tent, he lay down on his bed and slept for a short time. On waking, he exclaimed, "Constant, go and see; I think I heard a noise outside." I went out, and came back to say that General Caulaincourt had arrived. The Emperor jumped off the bed and ran out to meet the General, anxiously asking, "Have you brought me any prisoners?" The General replied that he had not been able to capture any, as the Russian soldiers preferred death to surrender.

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"Bring up all the artillery," cried the Emperor. As his plan was to exterminate the Russians, he thought that heavy guns would be more effective, and save his troops the fatigue of incessant firing.

On the 6th, at midnight, the Emperor was informed that the Russian camp-fires were less numerous; in fact, that at several points lights had disappeared. Some said that they heard the distant roll of drums. Throughout the whole army the utmost uneasiness prevailed. The Emperor rose from his bed in alarm. "It is impossible!" he kept repeating. I wanted him to be more warmly clad, for the night was cold; but he was so eager to assure himself of the fact, that he only flung his cloak round him and hurried out of the tent. It was true; the bivouac-fires had paled somewhat. The Emperor had terrible suspicions. Where would the war stop if the Russians retreated still further? He came back to his tent in great agitation, and lay down again, muttering, "Well, to-morrow morning we shall see."

On the 7th, the sun rose in a cloudless sky. The Emperor exclaimed, "It is the sun of Austerlitz." This phrase of His Majesty was repeated to the troops, who echoed it enthusiastically. At roll-call the following order of the day was read out;

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"Soldiers!

"This is the battle for which you all have longed! Henceforth the victory depends upon yourselves. We need it; it will give us abundance, good winter quarters, and a speedy home-coming. Behave as you behaved at Austerlitz, at Friedland, at Witepsk, at Smolensk; and may posterity long afterwards point proudly to your conduct on this day, so that of each man it may be said, 'He was at that great battle beneath the walls of Moscow.'"

Repeated cheering from the troops made answer to this stirring appeal that the Emperor himself had dictated. Napoleon was on the Borodino heights when the enthusiastic shouts reached his ears; he stood there with arms folded, the sunlight right in his eyes, besides the dazzling reflection from French and Russian bayonets. He smiled, and then became grave until the conflict ended.

That day they brought Napoleon the portrait of the King of Rome; in the midst of all his great anxiety he needed so tender a reminiscence of home. For a long while he held the picture on his lap, gazing at it in ecstasy; and he said that never in all his life had he had so agreeable a surprise. He repeatedly murmured, "My dear Louise! How charmingly thoughtful of her!" A

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strange, indescribable look of happiness came into his face, calm and yet sad. "Dear child!" That was all he said.

Then, re-assuming his pride as a father and as an Emperor, he commanded the officers and men of the Old Guard to come and see the portrait of his son. It was placed on view outside the tent. Nothing was more touching than to see these old soldiers gravely bare their heads before this picture, while some sought to discover in it a likeness to their great leader. The Emperor looked radiantly happy as they filed past; as a father, he felt that in the hereafter no better friends would his son find than those veterans, his loyal comrades in peril and renown.

At four o'clock a.m., one hour before the battle, Napoleon became suddenly indisposed. He had shivering fits, though unaccompanied by fever, and he was obliged to lie down on his bed. However, he was not as ill as M. de Ségur has made out. For some time he had been suffering from a severe cold, which the continual fatigues of this memorable day only served to increase. This was accompanied by a total loss of voice, which he sought to cure by a regular soldiers' remedy, weak punch. All night long he sat up

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working, but he could not speak. This trouble lasted two days. On the 9th he was well again, and his cough had almost left him.

After the battle, in every six corpses there was one Frenchman to five Russians. At noon, an aide-de-camp brought news to the Emperor of the death of Count Auguste de Caulaincourt, brother of the Duke of Vicenza, who had been struck by a bullet. The Emperor sighed deeply, but made no remark; he knew that further heartrending news would reach him before the day's work was over. Later on he sent a most touching message of condolence to the Duke on his sad bereavement.

Count Auguste de Caulaincourt was a brave young officer, who had left his girl-bride a few hours after their wedding to join the French army, and here, at the battle of the Moskowa, he met with a glorious death. He had married a sister of one of the Court pages, and owing to the extreme youth of this charming young lady, her parents desired that the consummation of the marriage should not take place until the war was over. This was also done in the case of Prince Aldobrandini, when he married Mademoiselle de la Rochefoucault before the battle of Wagram. Count de Caulaincourt was killed when leading a charge

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of Montbrun's cuirassiers, their general himself sharing a like fate. When speaking of his dead generals, the Emperor would often say, "So-and-so is lucky; he died on the field of glory, whilst I shall probably have the bad luck to die in my bed." When Marshal Lannes' death occurred, he was less of a philosopher; I saw how he wept at lunch that day; the great tears rolled down his cheeks and fell into his plate. Keen was his grief for Desaix, Poniatowski, Bessières; but most he mourned for Lannes, and, after him, for Duroc.

All the while the battle of the Moskowa lasted, the Emperor suffered from attacks of dysentery. He had been warned that this would happen if he were not more careful. Though in great pain, he complained but little, it was only some specially sharp paroxysm that could wring from him a stifled cry. At Austerlitz, the Emperor remarked, "Ordener is used up; there's only one time in a man's life for war; I am good for another six years of it; after that, I myself shall have to stop."

The Emperor rode over the battlefield, when a ghastly spectacle met his view. Almost all the dead were covered with wounds, a proof with what fury they had fought. The weather now changed; it began to rain and blow hard. The poor wounded

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not yet removed by the ambulance-waggons strove to rise, so as to attract attention and help. Some even cried out, "Long live the Emperor!" in spite of their pain and exhaustion. All our dead who had been hit by Russian bullets showed large wounds like great holes, the Russian bullets being far larger than ours. One standard-bearer had wrapped his flag round him as if it were a shroud. He at first showed signs of life, but from the shock of removal instantly expired. The Emperor rode on, and said not a word. Several times as he passed some of the most dreadfully mutilated bodies, he put his hand up to his eyes so as not to see them. Such composure did not last long. We came to a place where French and Russians lay pell-mell in a hideous heap; almost all the sufferers were severely wounded. At the sound of their cries I saw the Emperor burst out into a passion, and he rated in furious tones the men of the ambulance corps for their lack of promptitude in doing their work. The horses could hardly help trampling some of the wounded under foot. One man was kicked by a horse ridden by a member of the suite. The poor fellow uttered a piercing scream, and the Emperor turned round angrily to know what clumsy person it was who had hurt the soldier. Thinking to calm

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his anger they replied that it was only a Russian. "Russian or French," rejoined the Emperor, "I want them all carried off!"

Mortally wounded, some of our poor lads, who had never seen active service before, quite lost their nerve, and, sobbing like children, called out for their mother. This frightful scene will always remain graven upon my memory. The Emperor once more insisted upon the speedy removal of all the wounded; then he silently turned round and rode back to headquarters. I remained with him during the night. He was most restless; in fact, he hardly slept at all. As he tossed about on his pillow, I heard him constantly muttering, "Poor Caulaincourt! What a day! What a day!"

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CHAPTER XXVII

Our journey from France to Russia—Splendour of the Dresden Court—The Emperor and Berthier—England Napoleon's only foe—Rumour as to Poland—Passage of the Niemen—Arrival at Wilna—Polish enthusiasm—Promises to Austria—M. de Balakoff—Hopes of peace—The Emperor first sets foot in Russia—The Russians continue to retreat—Dreadful storm—The army's privations—First feeling of discouragement—The Emperor's disdain for his enemies—The Russians again retreat—The Emperor and the King of Naples—A scheme that was never carried out—The Emperor overcome by the heat—Undress audiences—The Emperor's uneasiness—Useless opposition on the part of the Duke of Vicenza and others—We leave Witepsk for Smolensk—The banks of the Moskowa.

As already stated, I propose to devote this chapter to an account of our experiences when travelling from the French to the Russian frontier. Great indeed will prove the contrast between our journey to Moscow and our return!

To form an idea of the highest pinnacle of human greatness, one ought to have seen Napoleon at Dresden surrounded by princes and kings. There, more than anywhere else, the Emperor showed himself extremely affable to everyone; all things smiled

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upon him; nor had anybody who, like ourselves, witnessed the glorious spectacle of his triumph, the faintest conception that fortune would soon, and for the first time in his life, play him false. Ah me! how false she proved!

When staying at Dresden, I remember something that the Emperor said to Marshal Berthier, for whom he had sent one morning early. When the Marshal arrived the Emperor was still in bed. I received orders to admit him immediately, and thus, while dressing His Majesty, I had an opportunity of overhearing their talk. One phrase of it I can distinctly remember. The Emperor said, "I bear Alexander no ill-will; it is not with Russia that I am at war, any more than with Spain. I have only one enemy, and that is England. It is she I want to reach in Russia; I will pursue her everywhere." Meanwhile the Marshal bit his nails, as usual. That day there was a grand review, at which all the Princes of the Confederation were present, surrounding their chief like vassals of the Crown.

When the different army corps stationed on the other side of the Elbe had advanced toward the Polish frontier, we left Dresden; and in every place the Emperor met with the same enthusiasm. Thus we of his suite came in for some of the

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homage, so eager was everybody to entertain His Majesty (and those who were privileged to serve him) in right Royal fashion.

At this time there was a general rumour afloat that the Emperor intended to re-establish the Kingdom of Poland. Sometimes the Emperor would condescend to ask me what I had heard in Court and camp about this, and then he would smile as I told him all I knew. Just then it is no exaggeration to say that he was regarded by the Poles as their saviour.

By the 23rd of June we were on the banks of the Niemen, a river famous on account of the interview betwen the two Emperors when their relations were vastly different from their present ones. The army commenced crossing that evening, and the passage lasted nearly forty-eight hours, during which time the Emperor was almost always in the saddle, for he knew that his presence made the work go quicker. At last we were on the road to Wilna, capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, before which town we arrived on the 27th. It was occupied by the Russians, and it may be said that only now did military operations commence, as up till then the Emperor had merely been travelling much as he might have done in

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France. The Russians were attacked and repulsed, so that two days afterwards we were in Wilna, a town of considerable size, containing thirty thousand inhabitants. I was struck by the enormous number of convents and churches. At Wilna the Emperor was extremely gratified at the request made to him by five or six hundred students who desired to enlist in the French army. Needless to say, such appeals rarely met with any but a favourable reception.

We stayed a good while at Wilna. The Emperor there superintended the disposition of his forces and also busied himself with the organisation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As the Emperor was often on horseback, I had plenty of leisure to become acquainted with the town and its environs. The Lithuanians greeted me with indescribable enthusiasm, and, though I have witnessed many and many a *fête*, I shall never forget the wild excitement with which all the townsfolk celebrated the grand national festival of the regeneration of Poland, a *fête* which, either by chance or the Emperor's design, fell exactly on the 14th of July. The Poles were still uncertain as to the fate which the Emperor had in store for their country, but a future bright with hope shone before their eyes.

A like enthusiasm prevailed when the Emperor

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received a deputation representing the Polish Confederation at Warsaw. It was headed by a Palatine Count, and asked for the re-establishment in its former integrity of the Kingdom of Poland. The following was the Emperor's reply:

"Gentlemen, I have listened with interest to all that you have just told me. As a Pole, I should think and act as you do; I should have voted as you voted in the Warsaw Assembly. Love of country is the first duty of every civilised man.

"In my position I have to conciliate many interests and to fulfil many duties. Had I reigned at the time of the first, second, and third divisions of Poland, I would have armed all my people to support you. So soon as victory has enabled me to restore your old laws to your capital and a part of your provinces, I have eagerly done so, yet without prolonging a war which entailed the shedding of my subjects' blood.

"I like your nation. For sixteen years I have seen your soldiers in my ranks, fighting on Italian battlefields as on those of Spain.

"I commend all that you have done, and I authorise all the efforts that you are making. In whatever way I can support such efforts, be sure that I will do it.

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"If your efforts are unanimous, you may hope to force your enemies to recognise your rights.

"But in countries so vast and so remote as these, it is on the unanimous co-operation of all who inhabit them that hopes of triumph can alone be based.

"I spoke to you in the same way when first I appeared among you in Poland. Here it behoves me to add that to the Austrian Emperor I have guaranteed the integrity of his States, and that I can sanction no undertaking, no movement which could tend to disturb his peaceful possession of that which belongs to him of Polish provinces. Let Lithuania, Samogitie, Witepsk, Polotzk, Mohilow, Wolhynia, Ukraine, and Podolia be animated by the same spirit that I have observed in Greater Poland, and Providence shall crown with success your holy cause, rewarding your patriotic devotion, which has won for you my sympathy, and which entitles you to my protection and esteem. On these you may in all circumstances rely."

I have thought it best to give the whole of the Emperor's speech to the Polish deputies, having myself witnessed the effect which it produced at Wilna. Certain Poles with whom I was intimate alluded to it sorrowfully, yet their alarm did not

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strike me as being very intense. The air nevertheless rang with loud cries of "Long live the Emperor!" whenever His Majesty appeared in public, which was almost every day.

During our stay at Wilna there seemed to be some hope that another treaty of peace would be concluded, as an envoy of the Czar was received in audience by Napoleon. Such hope, however, was brief, and I since learned that the Russian envoy, M. Balakoff, fearing, like all his compatriots, that the two Emperors might be reconciled, had delivered his message in such a way as to wound Napoleon's pride, who curtly dismissed him after a far from cordial reception. All just then was in the Emperor's favour; he was at the head of the largest, most formidable army that he had ever yet commanded. Thus M. Balakoff took his departure, and all was made ready to carry out the Emperor's plans. Just as he was crossing the Russian frontier, His Majesty's calm demeanour seemed to have deserted him; at least I found him more than usually taciturn whenever I had the honour of approaching him. Yet as soon as the die was cast, as soon as the troops had crossed the Vilia, the Emperor took possession of Russian soil with all the ardour and enthusiasm of a young man. One of the suite told

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me that the Emperor gave spurs to his horse and galloped almost a league ahead, though he had no escort, and bands of Cossacks lurked in the wooded heights that overlooked the right bank of the Vilia.

More than once I have seen how impatient the Emperor grew if there were no enemy to fight. The Russians had abandoned Wilna, which we had entered unopposed, and, as we left it, scouts reported the entire absence of the enemy in front with the exception of the Cossacks which I have just mentioned. I recollect that once we all thought we could hear the sound of distant guns, when the Emperor almost trembled with delight. But we soon knew the reason of this, for shortly afterwards an awful thunderstorm broke over our heads, the worst that I had ever seen in my life. For more than forty leagues round the ground was submerged, so that the roads could not be distinguished, and this tempest, murderous as any battle, cost us a great number of men, thousands of horses, and a great quantity of army-stores and ammunition.

It was known that for long past the Russians were securely entrenching themselves at Drissa, and from the size of their army and the expense of such entrenchment, we concluded that it was here that they were awaiting our arrival. Moreover, in his

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manifestoes, the Czar had made it his vaunt that he would vanquish the French at Drissa, where we should all find a grave. Fate, however, decreed it otherwise. The Russians retreated once more, and, at the Emperor's approach, abandoned this famous camp. I heard several of our staff-officers say that a big battle would have a good moral effect upon the French army, where certain signs of discontent had now manifested themselves, first because there was no enemy to fight, and secondly because privation and hardships increased from day to day and became more and more insufferable. Whole divisions now lived entirely by pillage, and the soldiers sacked the few farms or mansions scattered about the country. And although the Emperor had issued strict orders to prevent pillage, it became impossible to execute these, for it is well known most of the officers were in the habit of sharing the plunder with their men.

Towards his generals the Emperor affected a composure, a calm, which in his heart of hearts he did not really possess. From a few words which at this grave juncture it was my privilege to hear him utter, I got the impression that the Emperor was only eager for a battle so that the Czar might make fresh overtures for peace. After one great

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victory, I believe that he would have accepted such proposals, but he would never have consented to recede after such immense preparations without having fought one of those great battles which suffice to make a campaign glorious. This, at any rate, is what I often heard him remark. The Emperor also often spoke of the foes he was to fight with an air of affected disdain; he did not really feel this. By this he thought to cheer up his officers and men, many of whom did not scruple to show how discouraged they were.

Before leaving Wilna, the Emperor had established a sort of government, at the head of which he placed the Duke de Bassano, so as to have a point of communication between France and his own line of operations in the interior of Russia. Disappointed at finding Drissa abandoned, we rapidly pushed forward in the direction of Witepsk, where, by the end of July, the greater part of the French forces was assembled. Here again the Emperor was baulked, for the Russians continued to retreat. The engagements at Ostrovno and Mohilow, though important, could not be counted with one of those battles which the Emperor was so eager to commence. On entering Witepsk, the Emperor heard that the Czar, who a few days previous had made this place his head-

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quarters, had left for St. Petersburg with the Grand Duke Constantine.

On our arrival at Witepsk it was rumoured that the Emperor would be content to fortify himself in this position, and provide means for the maintenance here of his troops, postponing the execution of his vast designs upon Russia until the following year. I cannot say what he really had at the back of his mind, but as my room adjoined his, I often heard his conversation, and one day I remember his telling the King of Naples that the first Russian campaign was over, that next year he meant to reach Moscow, and the year afterwards St. Petersburg, so that the Russian war was to last three years. Would to God that His Majesty had carried out this scheme which he thus energetically expounded to the King of Naples! In that case perhaps so many brave fellows would not have perished during that appalling retreat, the disasters of which I shall presently narrate.

During our stay at Witepsk the heat was excessive, and the Emperor suffered greatly from it. I often heard him complain of it, nor had I ever seen him find the weight of his clothes so irksome before. In his quarters he scarcely ever wore a coat, and frequently lay down upon his bed.

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To this fact many besides myself can testify, for he often received his staff-officers when thus undressed, though his habitual practice had formerly been to appear in full uniform. Yet though the heat had affected him physically, his great mental powers were in no way enervated thereby, and with ceaseless energy his colossal genius controlled and directed all. But to close observers it was plain that at Witepsk uncertainty was what really harrassed him. Should he stay in Poland, or should he advance without delay and penetrate to the very heart of Russia? It was this suspense, this hovering between two alternatives, which so often made him moody and sad. At length, after a council of war, in which there were several opposing voices, the Emperor's choice prevailed, and I heard that we were to march upon Moscow, which could be reached in twenty days. Among those who most vehemently opposed this plan were the Duke of Vicenza and the Comte de Löbau. At any rate, I know for a fact that the Grand Marshal of the Palace repeatedly sought to dissuade the Emperor from such an enterprise. Their efforts, however, collapsed when confronted by his will.

Accordingly we advanced towards the second capital of Russia, and, after a march of some days,

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reached Smolensk, a large, handsome city. The Russians, whom the Emperor at last believed were in his grip, had just evacuated it, after losing many of their men, and having burned most of the shops. The place was in flames as we entered it, yet this was nothing compared with what awaited us at Moscow. At Smolensk I noticed two most beautiful buildings, the cathedral and the episcopal palace, a very town in itself, so vast were these in structure and so far removed from the other houses in the town. On the 5th of September we reached the banks of the Moskowa, where, to his infinite satisfaction, the Emperor perceived that at last the Russians were disposed to fight the great battle for which all the while he had so ardently longed, and which he had doggedly pursued for over two hundred leagues as if it were a prey that might at no cost elude his grasp.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

The day after Moskowa—The Emperor exhausted—A false alarm —Saxon marauders—The plucky sentinel and his glass of Chambertin—Entry into Moscow—The army's silent march— The Muscovite beggars—The Emperor's quarters—Fire breaks out—Marshal Mortier threatened—The Kremlin—More incendiarism—The Emperor impassive—He is in danger of being burnt—Offer of rescue refused—The Emperor and the Prince d'Eckmühl—Female incendiaries—The Petrowski Palace —The Kremlin saved—Marshal Mortier gets the password— Bivouac at the gates of Moscow—Fugitives in the cellars and among the ruins—Return to the Kremlin—More fires break out—Music hath charms—But not in this case—Two Frenchmen visit the Emperor—They are authorised to maintain order —Rostopchine and the Czar.

THE day after the battle of Moskowa I was with the Emperor in his tent, which had been pitched on the battlefield itself. There was a great stillness all about us. It was a fine sight to see our army rallying its ranks, in which the Russian guns had made such fearful gaps, and proceeding to bivouac with that sense of security which victors always enjoy. The Emperor seemed overcome by fatigue. Every now and then he clasped his hands, and with a sort

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of convulsive movement kept exclaiming, "Moscow! Moscow!" He often sent me outside to see what was going on; then he would get up himself, and, coming behind me, look over my shoulder. The noise of the sentry presenting arms always warned me of his approach. After a quarter of an hour spent in thus going silently to and fro, the outposts cried, "To arms!" It is impossible to describe the alacrity with which the men formed a square round the Emperor's tent. His Majesty hurried out and then rushed back to get his hat and sword. It proved, however, to be a false alarm. A regiment of marauding Saxons had been mistaken by the men for the enemy.

The mistake provoked great mirth, especially as the marauders were seen returning, some with great pieces of meat stuck on the tips of their bayonets, and others with half-plucked fowls or tempting-looking hams. I was outside the tent at the time, and shall never forget the sentry's first action at the cry "To arms!" Lowering his rifle, he looked at the lock to see if it was properly primed, tapping this with his thumb. Then he shouldered arms, and said coolly, "Let them come! We'll give it them!" I told this to the Emperor, who was much amused, and he repeated the tale to Marshal Berthier. His

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Majesty afterwards gave this plucky soldier a glass of his own Chambertin.

The Duke of Dantzig was the first to enter Moscow. The Emperor did not do so till later, making his entry at night. No night was ever gloomier than this. There was something weird and dreadful about the army's silent march, suspended from time to time as messages from the interior of the town kept arriving. None of the inhabitants were visible, except a few ragged beggars who watched our passage in stupid amazement. Some seemed inclined to ask for alms, and our men threw them bread and a few silver coins. Seeing these wretches, I could not help thinking sadly enough that their condition ever remains unaltered by any great upheaval; they alone are devoid of home-ties and of national sympathies.

While marching through the streets we looked up at the windows on either side, surprised at never seeing a single face. Here and there a light shone, but it was soon extinguished, and these scanty signs of life which suddenly vanished inspired us with horror. The Emperor halted at Dorogomilow, in the suburbs—not at an inn, as some have stated, but at a private house of so dirty and wretched a type that next day in the Emperor's bed and on his

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clothes we found vermin that are but too common in Russia. We servants had them, too, much to our disgust. The Emperor could not sleep a wink all night. As usual I slept in his room, and in spite of my precaution to burn vinegar and aloe-wood the odour was so disagreeable that every minute the Emperor kept calling me.

"Are you asleep, Constant?"

"No, Sire."

"Burn some vinegar, my lad; I can't bear this awful smell. It's perfect torture. I can't possibly sleep!"

I did all I could; and yet, a moment later, when the fumes of the vinegar had evaporated, sugar had to be burnt, or aloe-wood.

It was two o'clock that morning when news came that the city was on fire. Some French residents and a Russian police officer brought confirmation of this, giving such precise details that the Emperor had no longer any room for doubt. Yet he still persisted in disbelieving the fact. "It's not possible! Do you believe it's true, Constant? Do go and see if it is." Then he threw himself down on his bed and tried to rest, and soon called me back to ask me the same questions.

The Emperor passed the night in a state of

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extreme agitation. When day came he knew all. He sent for Marshal Mortier, threatening to punish him and the Young Guard. Mortier's only reply was to point to the iron-roofed houses, which, seemingly, were wholly untouched. But the Emperor bade him observe the black smoke issuing from them, and, clenching his fists, stamped on the floor of his bed-chamber.

At six that morning we were in the Kremlin. The apartment occupied by Napoleon was that of the Czars, overlooking a vast terrace with a great stone staircase. Below lay the church, where kings are interred, the senate-house, the barracks, the arsenal, and a fine bell-tower surmounted by a cross that tops the whole city. This is the gilt cross of Ivan the Great. The Emperor seemed pleased at this beautiful view, for as yet no signs of burning could be detected in the buildings that surrounded the Kremlin. This palace is of composite structure, partly Gothic and partly modern, which gives it a most strange appearance. It was in this vast edifice that the dynasties of Romanoff and Rurick flourished. This was the palace that was so often stained with blood by the fell conspiracies of a ferocious Court, at a period when domestic disputes were commonly settled by the

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poniard. Nor could His Majesty enjoy even here a few hours of quiet sleep.

Somewhat reassured by Marshal Mortier's reports, the Emperor wrote a letter in peaceful terms to the Czar. A Russian envoy was to take the letter, when all at once the Emperor perceived a lurid light against the sky at no great distance from the palace. It was the fire, which had broken out with even greater intensity, and the northerly gale blew the flames in the direction of the Kremlin. It was midnight. The alarm was given by two officers quartered in that wing of the building which was nearest the conflagration. Wooden painted houses were destroyed in a few moments; oil and spirit stores blazed up, and with livid tongues of flames brought ruin to the houses round them. Huge sparks fell upon the roof of the Kremlin, and it was a fearful thing to think that one of these sparks, if it chanced to alight on our powder stores, would have blown up the whole palace. By a strange oversight, a park of artillery was stationed immediately below the Emperor's windows.

Soon incredible stories reached headquarters. The Russians had been seen setting fire to places themselves, feeding the flames by pouring on oil and inflammable substances of all kinds. Those of the

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Muscovites who did not take part in the work of incendiarism strolled about with arms folded, contemplating the disaster with inconceivable coolness. Omit the shouts and hand-clapping, and one might have taken them for honest folk enjoying a brilliant display of fireworks. The Emperor had no doubt but that this was a plot of the enemy. He descended the grand north staircase, famous as the scene of the Strelitz massacre. The fire had already made such enormous progress on this side that the outer gates were partially destroyed. The horses of his carriage refused to pass through, rearing wildly in their terror. It was with the utmost difficulty that they could be got past. The Emperor's hair was singed, and parts of his grey overcoat were burnt. A moment later and we were walking on hot embers. All danger, however, was not past. Our road was blocked by flaming *débris*, and we made several unsuccessful attempts to cross. The hot breath of the flames touched our faces and drove us back in horror and confusion. At last a postern-door opening on to the Moskowa was reached, and through this the Emperor and his staff managed to escape from the Kremlin. Yet it was but to get back into narrow by-streets, where the fire raged as in a furnace, and the houses almost met over our

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heads, making a red glowing vault above us which shut out the sky. We had no time to lose. One exit alone remained, a narrow, winding street, choked with wreckage of all sorts, iron girders and smouldering beams. For a moment we hesitated. Some of us offered to wrap the Emperor in our cloaks from head to foot, and carry him in our arms along this terrible alley. The Emperor refused such help, and promptly settled the question by running at full speed across the burning barrier. Two or three vigorous leaps and he was safe. Then it was that the touching scene occurred between the Emperor and the Prince d'Eckmühl, who, wounded at the Moskowa, had caused himself to be brought into the burning city, resolved to save the Emperor or die with him. When, at considerable distance, the Marshal saw him calmly escape such hideous peril, like a staunch, affectionate comrade, he made one heroic effort, and ran forward to embrace the Emperor, who pressed him to his heart.

At last the very air grew too hot to breathe; the palace windows were shattered; to remain in any of the rooms was impossible. The Emperor was like one in a dream, calm, impassive, his face flushed, and beads of perspiration on his brow. The King of Naples, Prince Eugene and the Prince of

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Neufchâtel urged him to leave the palace, but his only reply was an impatient gesture. At that moment cries from the north wing showed that part of the walls had fallen in, and that the fire was gaining ground with appalling speed. The position was no longer tenable, and the Emperor said that he must perforce escape. He then took up his residence at the Imperial château of Petrowski. Petrowski was a charming house belonging to one of the Czar's chamberlains. In the room which His Majesty was to occupy they found a man hidden, but as he was unarmed they let him go, thinking that possibly fright might have driven him to take refuge there. The Emperor arrived here during the night, waiting in great anxiety until the fire at the Kremlin should be extinguished. This country-house of a chamberlain was not his place. At last, thanks to the brave efforts of a battalion of the Guard, the Kremlin was saved from the flames, and the Emperor gave orders to quit Petrowski.

To re-enter Moscow we had to cross the camp. We walked through muddy, devastated fields, and I felt sad at seeing all our soldiers obliged to camp out in this swamp when they were really the masters of a vast and beautiful city, though the fire had now mastered them. When appointing Marshal Mortier

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to the governorship of Moscow, he said, "Above all things, no pillage, or you shall answer for it with your head!" This order was strictly enforced until the fire broke out, when the soldiers were allowed to loot as much as they might before the flames had devoured all.

Nothing was more amusing nor more melancholy than to see the soldiers' squalid tents bestrewn with costly furniture, flung here and there in confusion; silken couches, valuable Siberian furs, Cashmere shawls, silver dishes, and princely plate on which black bread and bloody horse-meat lay in gruesome lumps. Good, wholesome regimental bread would have been worth far more to them than all these treasures. Later on, no horse-meat was to be got for love or money.

On re-entering Moscow, the breeze brought us the insufferable odour of the burning houses; hot sparks were blown into our mouths and eyes; and often we had only just time to step aside before some crumbling pillar fell in ashes at our feet. Moscow was not as deserted as we had thought. In their terror of the conqueror, all the inhabitants who remained in the city had hidden themselves in cellars or in the huge vaults beneath the Kremlin. The fire had driven them like wolves to their dens;

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and when we got back, we found nearly twenty thousand inhabitants wandering amid the ruins, their faces, begrimed by smoke and pinched and haggard from hunger, wearing a dazed, stupefied expression, for they could not conceive how, sleeping under their own roof one night, in the morning all around them had become one vast plain. That starvation had driven them to extremes was evident; the few vegetables left in the gardens had been devoured raw; many of these poor wretches jumped into the Moskowa to try and fish out some of the wheat which Rostopchine had thrown into the river. Not a few were drowned in this attempt. Such were the harrowing scenes which the Emperor in returning to the Kremlin was forced to witness. The apartments which he occupied were very spacious and well lighted, but almost destitute of furniture. His iron bedstead was there on which he always slept when on active service. His windows overlooked the Moskowa. The fire was plainly visible, burning still in various quarters of the town, and which had no sooner been extinguished in one part than it broke out in another. One evening, in deep dejection, the Emperor said to me, "Those wretches won't leave a single stone upon another!"

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In no place do I think that there are so many crows as in Moscow. The Emperor was positively annoyed by them, and remarked to me, "Good God! are they going to follow us everywhere?"

While staying at Moscow several concerts were given at headquarters. The Emperor, when present at these, seemed very sad. Chamber music no longer made any impression upon one who was sick at heart, one whose only real music, which at all times stirred him, was the music of battlefields and camps.

The day after the Emperor's arrival, Messieurs E. and V. waited upon His Majesty at the Kremlin, in the hope of an interview. They were about to leave, disappointed, when suddenly they heard a blind drawn aside overhead. Looking up they recognised the Emperor, who said to them, "Sirs, who are you?"

"Sire, we are Frenchmen."

Then His Majesty bade them come up to his room, and continued his questioning.

"What kind of employment has led you to remain at Moscow?"

"We were tutors to some Russian gentlefolk, who, at the approach of Your Majesty's troops, were obliged to escape. We could not resist their entreaties to remain here and guard their estates, and

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at the present moment we are in sole charge of their palaces."

The Emperor asked them if there were other French subjects in Moscow, and begged them to bring them before him. He also proposed to appoint some of these Frenchmen officers for the maintenance of public order, decorating them with the tricolour, and urging them to prevent the Imperial troops from sacking the churches. He told them to shoot all culprits, and execute all the criminals to whom Rostopchine had given a free pardon on condition that they set fire to the town.

Some of these Frenchmen followed our army when it retreated, foreseeing that a longer stay in Moscow would prove disastrous to them. Those who remained behind were condemned to sweep the streets.

On hearing of Rostopchine's brutal treatment of these unfortunate Frenchmen, the Czar severely reprimanded him, and ordered him to set them free at once.

END OF VOL. III

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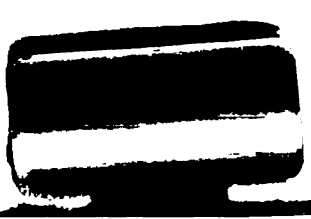

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